THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

CREEDENCE

CLEARWATER REVIVAL

SPECIAL COLLECTORS' EDITION!

"BOY, WHAT AN EGO"
REVEALING INTERVIEWS REVISITED

A SONG FOR EVERYONE
EVERY ALBUM REVIEWED INDEPTH

"A FAMILY BAND RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE"
FOGERTY'S LOCKDOWN FACTORY

KEEP ON CHOOGLIN'!
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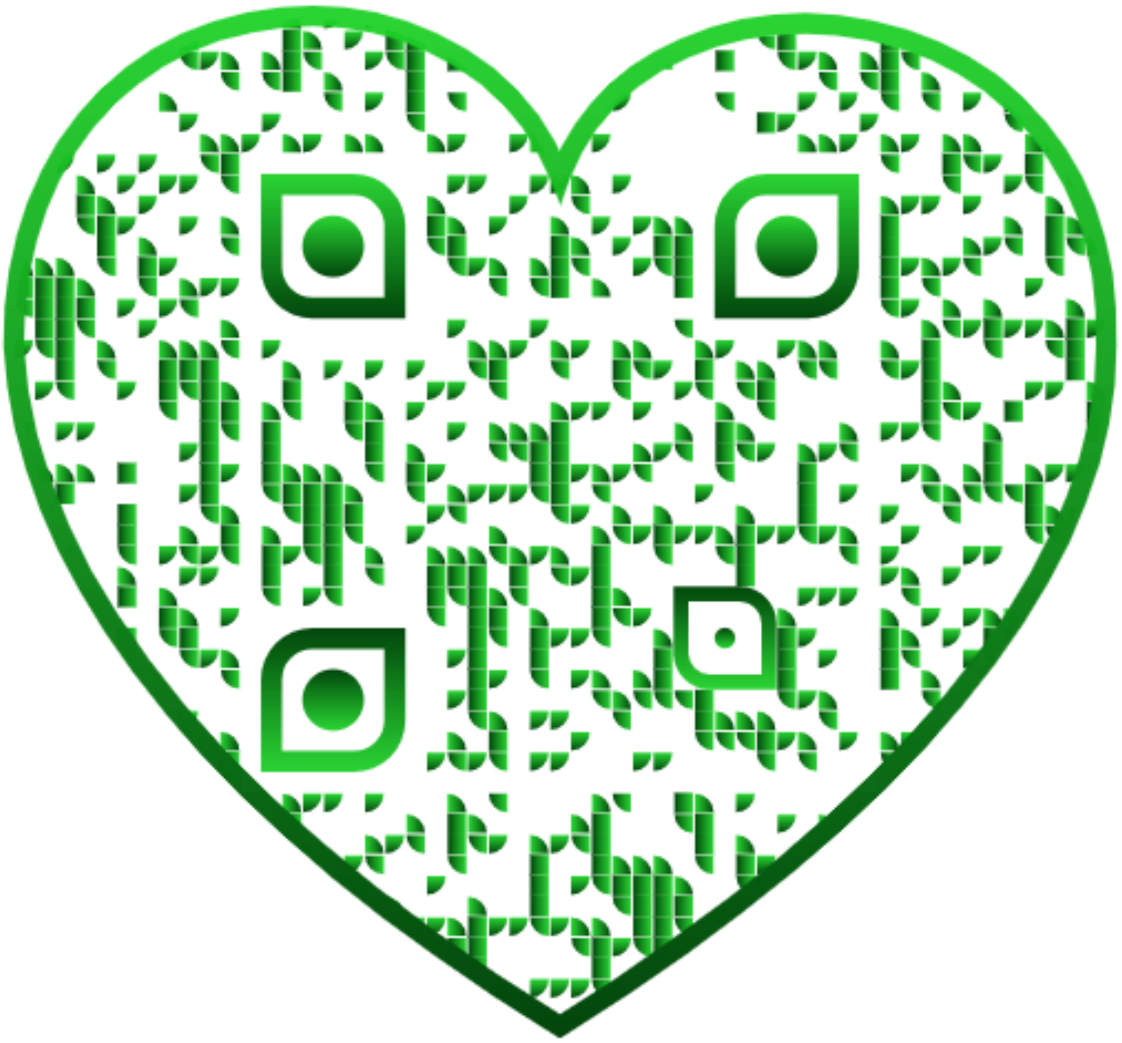

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DOWN THE ROAD HE GOES...

From Creedence Clearwater Revival to a long solo career, John Fogerty just keeps on chooglin'...

WHEN I first picked up a copy of *Willy And The Poor Boys* in the 1980s, I'm not sure whether I ever got much further than "Fortunate Son". The riff, the righteous self-definition, the rhythm driving the song forwards. It was excellent, and it seemed – to someone then far too uptight to choogle – to give me all I needed to hear.

Over 30 years later, it's not unreasonable to think John Fogerty didn't need to get much beyond "Fortunate Son" either. It forms the title of his autobiography, of course, and was one of the key battlegrounds on which his recent conflict with the former president of the United States was fought. It's an urgent and passionate rock'n'roll record, but also a faintly misleading one – it might sound raw, but it was anything but thrown together. Fogerty didn't just write the songs: he gave out the parts, woodshedded his band, and also produced the records.

As you'll discover over the following 120 pages of new and archival writing about Fogerty and Creedence Clearwater Revival, this approach was the fuel for an 18-month hot streak in which many of his Creedence classics – "Bad Moon Rising", "Proud Mary", "Lodi"... the Dude-pleasing list goes on – were written. As contemporary reporters observe in these pages with a mixture of puzzlement and delight ("Bayou Beat" is one attempted definition of what the band are up to), the group became, in a world struggling to accustom themselves to their absence, a band as big as The Beatles were. As one contemporary observer has it in these pages: the place where The Beatles were trying to get back to is where Creedence started out.

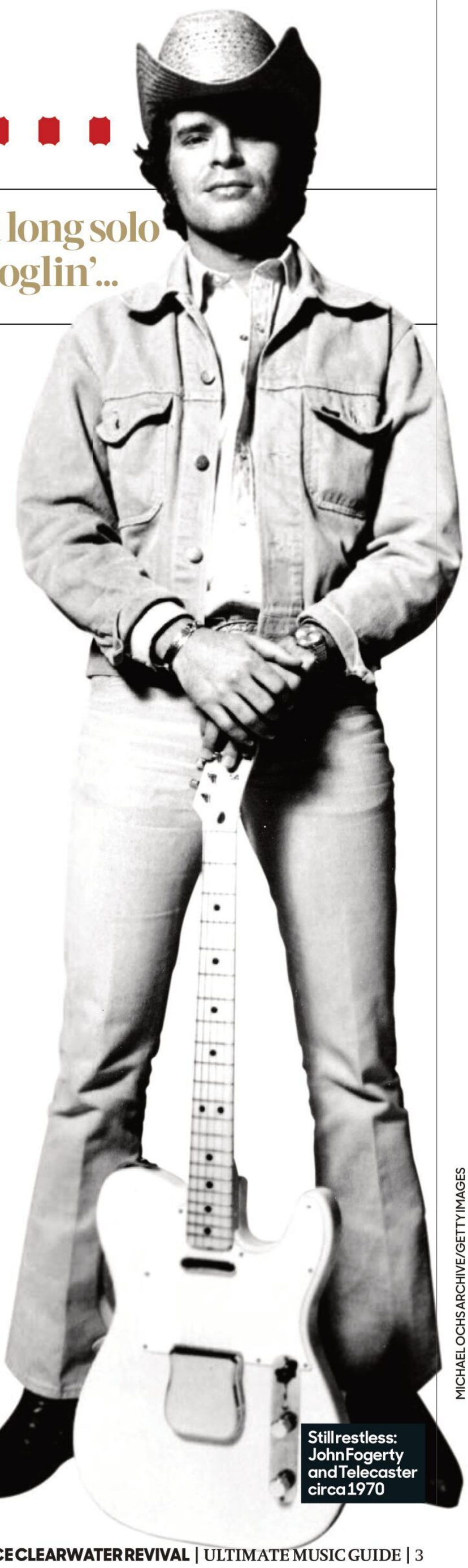
THE PLACE WHERE THE BEATLES WERE TRYING TO GET BACK TO IS WHERE CCR STARTED OUT

How simple it all sounds. Fogerty's relationship to his music, however, has proved a complex and conflicted one. As Creedence records sold in their millions, he jostled with other band members about his tight control of the music, and faced tough questions about his management of the group. His brother left the band. Having created joyful music, Fogerty began to question the terms he and the band were working under, the whole enterprise becoming intractably linked to poisonous business disagreements. After creating a one-man bluegrass band, Fogerty effectively retired from music, not emerging until the triumphant *Centerfield* album in 1985.

His has been a unique journey, marked by periods of intense activity followed by long retreats and deep reflection on his work. In recent years, he has been revitalised by wife Julie and his family, which has lately culminated in his role as a rock Lord of Lockdown and the great *Fogerty's Factory* record, in which he revisits some of his Creedence classics in the company of his "family band". His latest release, "Weeping In The Promised Land", meanwhile, finds a blue-collar American hero calling the powerful to account. As we speak, he is restless again, hard at work on preparing a new album.

Come with us, as we hitch a ride to the end of the highway.

John Robinson, Editor



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Still restless: John Fogerty and Telecaster circa 1970

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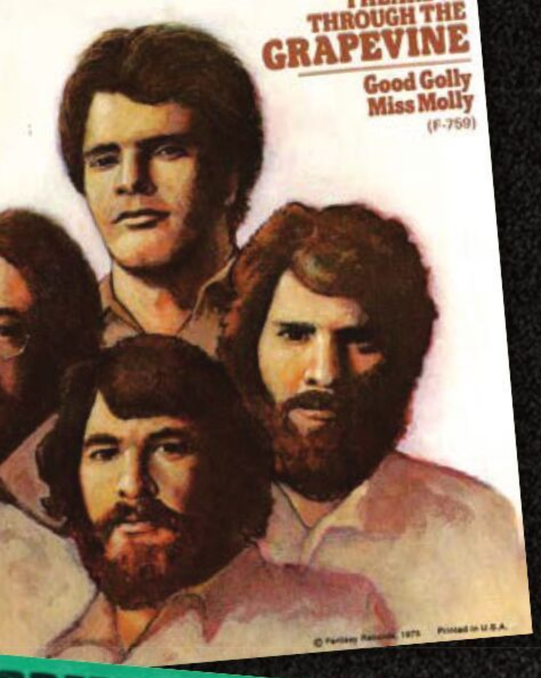
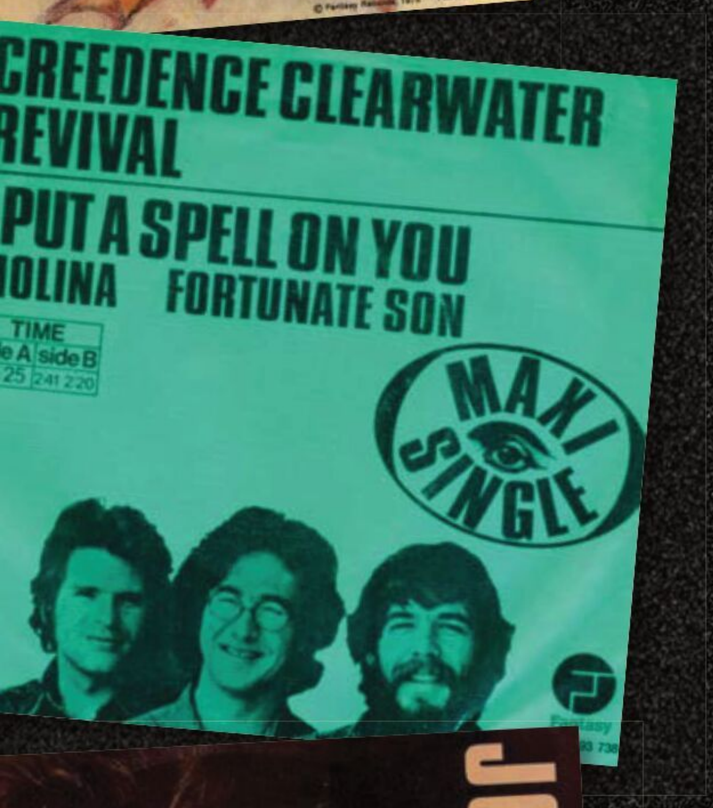
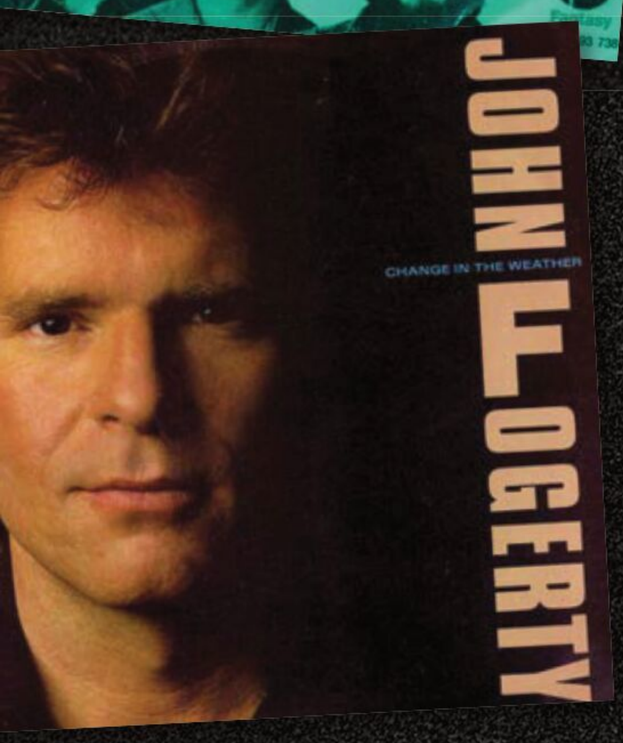
LEE CHERRY; PICTORIAL PRESS LTD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO







John Fogerty live with Creedence Clearwater Revival, Sportpaleis, Antwerp, Belgium, September 24, 1971

GIEKNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES

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TECHNOLOGIES

-2, 110 SOUTHWARK ST, LONDON SE1 0SU

EDITOR JOHN ROBINSON,
WHOSE FAVOURITE CCR SONG IS
RAMBLE TAMBLE
UNCUT EDITOR MICHAEL BONNER
LONG AS I CAN SEE THE LIGHT
ART EDITOR MARC JONES
BAD MOON RISING
SENIOR DESIGNER MICHAEL CHAPMAN
BAD MOON RISING
DESIGNER LORA FINDLAY
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN?
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT MARK BEAUMONT
BAD MOON RISING
PRODUCTION EDITOR MICK MEIKLEHAM
FORTUNATE SON
SENIOR SUB EDITOR MIKE JOHNSON
GREEN RIVER
PICTURE EDITOR PHIL KING
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN?
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PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

PUBLISHING PRODUCTION MANAGER
CRAIG BROADBRIDGE
DISTRIBUTED BY MARKETFORCE (UK) LTD, 5
CHURCHILL PLACE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON
E14 5HU

CLIENT SERVICES

MANAGER, COMMERCIAL & PARTNERSHIPS
GEMMA LUNDY *GEMMA.LUNDY@BANDLAB.*
CHARLOTTE WORT
CHARLOTTE.WORT@BANDLAB.COM

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MENG RU KUOK
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
IVAN CHEN
UK COUNTRY DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS
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AVP, WEB TECHNOLOGIES
LAURENT LE GRAVEREND
SNR MANAGER, BRAND & GROUP STRATEGY
KRYSTLE HALL
MANAGER, CONTENT STRATEGY
ILIYAS ONG

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Released: MAY 28, 1968

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

Blue-collar basics. How a band of long-time triers gave up a future as an underwhelming "third generation San Francisco band" to evolve a splendid, Southern-fried simplicity. *By Jim Wirth*

STRUGGLING to find anything helpful to say in his lengthy sleevenote for Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1968 debut LP, *Rolling Stone*'s Ralph J Gleason managed not to mention the band at all until the final paragraph, where he dismissed them apologetically as an "excellent example of the Third Generation of San Francisco bands". Singer John Fogerty knew what Gleason was really getting at: "Meaning we weren't quite as good as the Grateful Dead or Quicksilver Messenger Service."

Unhipsters from the wrong side of San Francisco Bay, Creedence had battled to fit in on the right side of the Golden Gate Bridge after changing their name from the now unforgiveable Golliwogs in time for the Summer Of Love. Former El Cerrito High schoolmates Fogerty, bassist Stu Cook and drummer Doug Clifford, and Fogerty's older brother – rhythm guitarist Tom – just about look the part in their Civil War threads on the cover of their 1968 debut LP, but they were not as far out as they seemed. The Fogerty brothers were both married, with children and a history of straight-world day jobs; John didn't smoke that much pot, and wasn't keen on acid, dismissing LSD evangelist Timothy Leary in his memoir, *Fortunate Son*, as a "buffoon".

"Our peers laughed at us and called us the boy scouts of rock'n'roll," remembered Clifford. "They said we would never make it because we didn't smoke reefer and we were not jamming. We went to see the local bands and they were so stoned they weren't even in tune. They were whacked out, yet when they came off the stage they were giving each other high fives because they thought they sounded so great."

However, it was that stoner demographic that Creedence were aiming to appeal to when they sent their extended riff on Dale Hawkins' 1958 swamp-rock oddity "Suzie Q" to hip Bay Area radio station KMPX. A Top 20 hit after it was stretched over two sides of a seven-inch single, its scratchy guitar breaks, minor-chord slashes and cloudbursts of overdubbed backing vocals ("*fine*", "*mine*", "*moon*", "*June*", Fogerty choruses to himself) mirrored the free-form weirdness of the top San Francisco acts. This was no freakout, though. His spooked-redneck howl already in place, Fogerty had carefully crafted this piece of marquee moonshine through bootcamp-style rehearsals with his bandmates. "There was a structure," he insisted years later, the musical equivalent of saying that he never inhaled. "It was organised."

Discipline came to be crucial to the Creedence aesthetic as they hit their commercial peak; as Cook put it: "We would play together every day when we ➤

John didn't smoke that much pot and wasn't keen on acid

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Fantasy
Stereo

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Produced by Saul Zaentz
A Fantasy Records Production
LIBERTY
STEREO
℗ 1969
LBS 83259
Side 1
1. I PUT A SPELL ON YOU (J. Hawkins/Slotkin) Metric Music 4.25
2. THE WORKING MAN (Fogerty) Jondora Music 3.02
3. SUZIE Q (D. Hawkins/Lewis/Broadwater) Jewel Music 8.34

weren't on the road. It was a job." However, Fogerty's straight-talking songwriting and the band's men-of-the-people stance was still evolving as their long musical apprenticeship came to an end.

From suburban El Cerrito, the core members of Creedence had been playing and recording together since the end of the 1950s, and backed Tom Fogerty, a more conventional singer, as the Blue Velvets and then the Blue Violets – on a clutch of pre-Beatles singles. More famous for their jazz output, local independent label Fantasy picked up the band and gave them that regrettable name. John Fogerty gradually eased his brother aside as frontman, and was front and centre when 1965's "Brown Eyed Girl" sold a few copies. "Fight Fire" was picked up by a UK label (and appeared on a later *Nuggets* compilation), while 1966's first run through "Walking On The Water" was pleasingly freaky, but Fogerty said that the proto-Creedence were still a "low-on-the-totem-pole bar band" when he received his Vietnam war draft notice that year.

While many avoided active service, burning their papers and going underground, Fogerty volunteered to join an army reserve unit instead. Thus, while the likes of Moby Grape and Jefferson Airplane were feeding their heads in San Francisco, Fogerty was square-bashing. He would claim, though, that the monotony of the parade ground was the making of him. "During all that marching, I would get delirious, and my mind would start playing little stories," he told *Uncut* in 2006, recalling how memories of his alcoholic father and bits of John Steinbeck novels morphed into a song, "Porterville". "I knew when I was doing it: 'Man, I'm on to something here.' Everything changed after that. I gave up trying to write sappy love songs about stuff I didn't know anything about, and I started inventing stories."

Having discovered these new creative reserves, Fogerty set to work on transforming his group into a band who could do his new material justice. Previously lacking motivation, Fogerty cajoled them into rehearsing every day, leaning harder on their formative musical influences – Chicago blues, folk, the Stakhanovite groove of Booker T & The MG's. Sensing change in the air as Fogerty's army haircut grew out, the band toyed with a number of new names – Hardwood, Gossamer Wump, Credence (sic) Nuball and the Ruby – before a series of free-association accidents led them from Whisky Rebellion to Creedence Clearwater Revival, with "Porterville" the first single released under their new name.

With its defiant "*I don't care*" refrain, it's a thrilling piece of hard-edged soul masquerading as a countercultural banger. "*They came and took my dad away to serve some time/But it was me that paid the debt he left behind*", Fogerty howls, but if his hard-luck story indicated Creedence's direction of travel, their influences could be a little transparent. "That guitar sound is the Airplane on *Surrealistic Pillow*," Fogerty conceded later. "Clean with a bunch of echo on it."

CRITICS' VERDICT

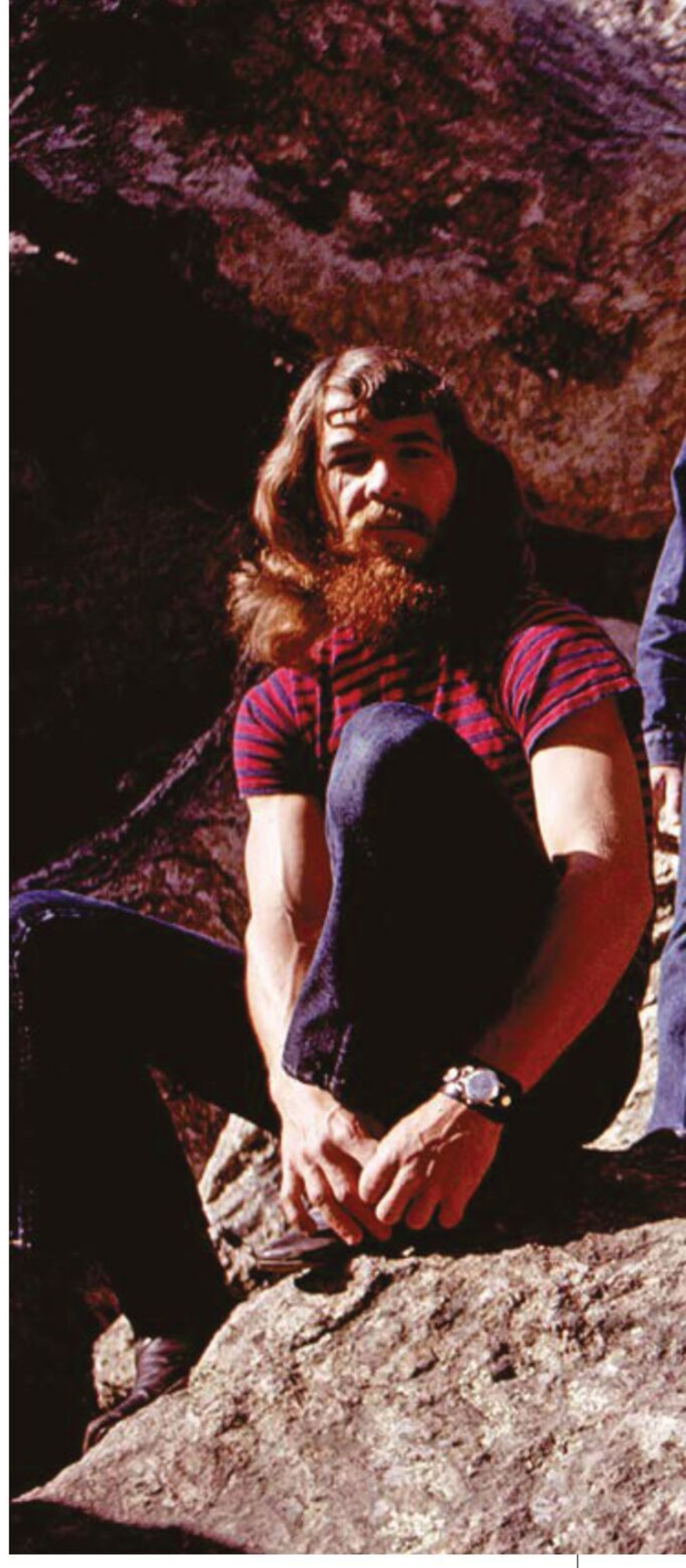
"Magnificent American group sparked by the excellent lead guitar and vocals of John Fogerty. Blues based but their music is much wider than that and really builds the excitement."
MELODY MAKER, 7/6/1969

UPTIGHT and raging, "Porterville" turned a few heads in San Francisco, but it was the success of "Suzie Q" that earned Creedence the chance to make an album. Label boss Saul Zaentz was credited as producer, but Fogerty would assert later that it was all his own work ("I got to run the show because there was nobody at Fantasy that had a clue," he said). It was clear from the opening track that the 22-year-old had a decent idea of where he was headed.

Creedence's agonised version of Screamin' Jay Hawkins' "I Put A Spell On You" remains a career-defining moment. It was a bizarre voodoo novelty record in its original 1956 incarnation, but Creedence play it evangelically straight, Fogerty raising the stakes on Hawkins' stagey whoops and gurgles with a blood-curdlingly impassioned assault. Anchored by a hard-drilled rhythm section, Fogerty accessorises his graveyard schlock with a run of feral guitar breaks, the missing link between the lava lamp lightning flashes of Quicksilver Messenger Service's John Cipollina and the Mark Rothko colour washes of Television's overlooked *Adventure*.

In retrospect, it was a subtle statement of intent. Fogerty appreciated smart, expansive pop records, but was drawn to less elegant stuff too. As he put it later: "Some people looked down on what made rock'n'roll what it was in the first place: fun. Loud, in your face, rebellious. Full of attitude." Creedence's version does for "I Put A Spell On You" what Andy Warhol did for Campbell's soup cans, treating kitsch as fine art – a signature move for a musician who was proud to admit that he "admires 'Wooly Bully' as much as 'The Times They Are a-Changin'"".

That veneration of the everyday becomes more explicit on "The Working Man" – a song that would become a manifesto of sorts for prole-art hardcore band the Minutemen a few years later. Over a stiff-backed soul groove, Fogerty makes explicit what separated Creedence from their San Francisco contemporaries. With children to feed, rent to pay, Creedence could not afford to be self-indulgent. Rebellion, he sang, was a privilege most young Americans could not afford. "*I ain't never been in trouble*", he sings, "*I ain't got the time*".



In that context, "Suzie Q" takes on a different tone. A piece designed to mimic a current trend for extended workouts, it starts to sound like a slightly mocking pastiche on repeated listening. Fogerty dances around the melody, throwing in his little thunderflashes of guitar, and singing one verse through what sounds like a vintage 1940s microphone, but the base rhythm remains squarely, relentlessly, Booker T-ishly the same. Wild improvisation might have been in vogue, but Creedence make something of a point of sticking doggedly to the middle of the road.

Their straight-up-and-down assault on Wilson Pickett's "Ninety-Nine And A Half (Won't Do)" had been part of Creedence's live repertoire, but chimes neatly with that slightly puritanical mood, Pickett's exhortation to commitment coming over like a riposte to the sloppy self-indulgence of psychedelia. "*We got to bring it all down, start gettin' it right/We got to stop this messin' around, and keep the thing up tight*".

However, despite the evident chip on their shoulder, Creedence weren't quite ready to make their stand. Their 'flannel shirt and Levi's' vision only really kicked in after Fogerty came up with his breakthrough hit "Proud Mary" in the weeks after *Creedence Clearwater Revival* was released. When he was working on the debut album, it seemed like he was a little light on marketable material.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Rock steady: CCR, the Bay Area's furry but far from freaky brothers

CREEDENCE *Clearwater Revival* sags in its closing phase. Fogerty's married-man's blues, "Get Down Woman", is a desperate plea for thinking space, and if "Porterville" still holds its own, "Gloomy" sounds like it was written on the hoof, psychedelic overdubs masking an untidy Howlin' Wolf mash-up; a bit of "Spoonful" here, some "Smokestack Lightning" there. The blues lexicon was to be essential to Creedence's success, but here it just gives Fogerty an easy songwriting out at a time when inspiration seemed to be lacking.

That would come before too long, and Creedence's update of "Walking On The Water" (titled "Walk On The Water" here) was a fine indication of their evolving mastery of dynamics and drama. Over a superbly tense backdrop (Clifford's drumming is as crucial to the debut LP as Fogerty's guitar), the singer tells a tantalising half story straight out of the *National Enquirer*. A man ventures out late at night for a walk down by the river only to be faced with something beyond his understanding. "*Couldn't believe, with my own eyes*", Fogerty sings in a convincing voice of terror, "*And I swear I'll never leave my home again*".

A figure walks towards him, "*calling out my name, 'do not be afraid'*" but unsure whether it's the messiah or a demon, he flees, the freaky stereo panning and the sly lift from The Byrds' "Eight Miles High" guitar solo adding to the fried Southern gumbo vibe as

With children to feed, rent to pay, Creedence could not afford to be self-indulgent

Fogerty wisely decides to ditch the half-arsed second verse on the single. Like *Creedence Clearwater Revival* itself, "Walk On The Water" is a tantalisingly unresolved piece.

However, if they could whip up a metaphysical storm, Creedence were fooling no-one when it came to being a freaky 'San Francisco' band. By the free-flowing standards of the Grateful Dead or Quicksilver Messenger Service, *Creedence Clearwater Revival* seemed like the work of uptight soul boys who didn't really get the point.

Rolling Stone reviewer Barry Gifford was even less impressed than Gleason was with the album. "The drummer is monotonous, the bass lines are all repetitious and the rhythm guitar is barely audible," he wrote: "The whole record is unimaginative, poorly produced and a great waste of John Fogerty's talents."

The perfectionist Fogerty may well have agreed, but if you strip back some of the less convincing period features, the key components of the golden-age Creedence sound are all in place. "We weren't whizz-bang, world-class virtuosos, and our strength was in the groove we could create together," Fogerty told *Uncut*.

They would return to the tentative pencil outlines they scratched down on "Porterville" and "I Put A Spell On You" with more confidence on *Bayou Country* the following year, by which time they had the whole 360 degree package in place, look as well as sound. They failed their acid test, but their future lay in something much less esoteric, and truer to their out-of-towner selves. As Fogerty sings on "The Working Man": "*I don't mess around with magic, what I got is mine.*"

TRACKMARKS CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL

1. I Put A Spell On You ★★★★★
2. The Working Man ★★★★
3. Suzie Q ★★★★
4. Ninety-Nine And A Half (Won't Do) ★★★
5. Get Down Woman ★★
6. Porterville ★★★★
7. Gloomy ★★
8. Walk On The Water ★★★★

Label: Liberty (UK)/ Fantasy (US)
Produced by: Saul Zaentz
Recorded at: Coast Recorders, San Francisco
Personnel: John Fogerty (lead guitar, vocal), Tom Fogerty (rhythm guitar), Stu Cook (bass), Doug Clifford (drums)
Highest chart position: UK –; US 52

Released: JANUARY 5, 1969

BAYOU COUNTRY

Leaving a reliable job in quasi-psychedelia and rollin' on his singular creative river, Fogerty invents swamp rock, via a song destined to become an all-American classic. *By Paul Moody*

IT was during a soundcheck at a gig in San Francisco on March 20, 1968 that John Fogerty stumbled upon the sound that would alter his band's fortunes forever.

Thrilled to be standing on stage at the Avalon Ballroom – one of the key venues for the Bay Area's psychedelic scene – the frontman started playing an E7 chord through his Kustom amp.

As its distorted vibrato sound echoed around the hall, an energised Fogerty shouted at his bandmates to play along, improvising a larynx-shredding vocal melody with a stream-of-consciousness jumble of vowels and consonants.

Just as this otherworldly blues was bubbling to a crescendo, however, the stage fell silent – the venue's stage manager had pulled the plug. When the frustrated singer demanded an explanation, he was told that there was no point in letting them continue – they clearly weren't going anywhere.

"I looked at him and said, "Not going anywhere?" recalled Fogerty of his reaction. "You give me a year, pal, and I'll show ya who's not goin' somewhere!"

True to his word, by the end of 1969, Creedence Clearwater Revival would be the most popular rock band in America, their run of three Top 10 albums and seven consecutive Top 10 singles unprecedented since The Beatles.

More extraordinary still was the sound they used to do it – debuted at the Avalon Ballroom, and the basis of their extraordinary second album, *Bayou Country*.

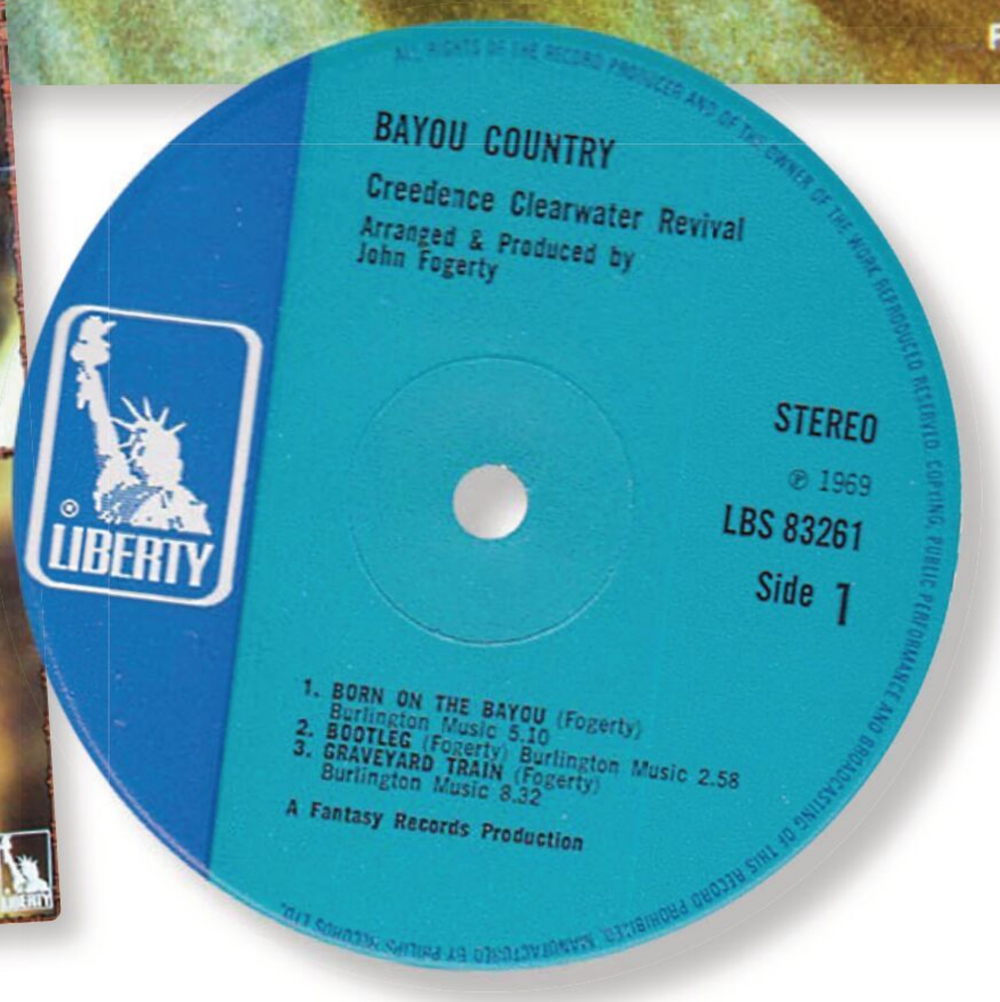
A swampy hybrid of soul, blues and early rock'n'roll delivered with the relentless rhythmic power of a freight train, it charted new territory for pop as successfully as Elvis and The Beatles before them.

As mystical as it was simplistic, it placed the emphasis on rhythmic interplay rather than flashiness, achieving a hypnotic intensity that paved the way for every blue-collar rocker from Bruce Springsteen to Nirvana and Kings Of Leon. All while holding up a (murky) mirror to the rapidly changing times.

With the country already unnerved by the escalating war in Vietnam and the death of Martin Luther King in April – and subsequent riots in Chicago that left 11 citizens dead – the assassination of President Robert Kennedy on June 6, 1968 felt like a psychological tipping point, proof that the utopian dream of 1967's Summer Of Love was fast turning into a waking nightmare.

While Creedence had had little contact with the goings-on in Haight-Ashbury the previous summer – they lived quietly with their girlfriends in the San Francisco suburb of El Cerrito – they were as conscious as everyone else of the ➤

It charted new territory for pop as successfully as Elvis and The Beatles before



F8 ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

impact of Kennedy's death and the civic unrest sweeping the nation. For the 23-year-old Fogerty, who watched the rolling news coverage at home in his small apartment in El Cerrito, it also acted as a creative catalyst.

WITH the band's commercial future far from certain – their self-titled debut album had stalled at No 52 on the US chart – and aware that, without a manager, publicist or major label, the odds were stacked against them, he seized hold of the creative reins. Rather than agree to the other band members' demands for more creative input, Fogerty assumed complete control, taking an iron grip on the band's future direction.

"Making the second album, *Bayou Country*, we had a real confrontation," he recalled later. "Everybody wanted to sing, write, make up their own arrangements, whatever, right? This was after 10 years of struggling. Now we had the spotlight. Andy Warhol's 15 minutes of fame."

Telling his band mates in no uncertain terms that he didn't want to "go back to the carwash", he set about writing a commercially viable follow-up to their debut. Using the sonic template he'd stumbled upon at the Avalon Ballroom, he worked through the night from 9pm until 4am in his apartment, writing lyrics inspired by the songs his mother would sing to him as a child, notably Stephen Foster's "Swanee River".

As he did so, an alternate universe emerged of a mythical Deep South full of Cajun Queens and chooglin' steamboats. Instilled with a mortal dread, it channelled the blues-based menace of The Rolling Stones while retaining the down-home feel of a back porch singalong. A feat made all the more remarkable by the fact that Fogerty had never ventured south of Montana.

With all seven of the album's precision-tooled songs written and rehearsed at their space, "The Factory" in Berkeley, during the summer of 1968, the band entered RCA Studios in Los Angeles with engineer Hank McGill in October. "When we recorded, we went in with an album," recalled drummer Doug Clifford. "We didn't take 15 songs and choose the best 10; we had the whole thing laid out. We would rehearse for two months before we went into the studio, and then we'd knock the album out in a couple of weeks." With each instrument close-miked and one overhead microphone used to capture the band playing as a unit, they recorded each of the seven tracks live over a two-week period, using between three and five takes on each to get the right feel.

From the opening bars of "Born On The Bayou" it's clear that Creedence were entering uncharted sonic territory. Ushered in with a rising hum of feedback, it's arguably the greatest scene-setter in rock history, as evocative a depiction of Louisiana life as seeing an alligator emerging from the swamp. Drenched in reverb and using a 'drop D' tuning favoured by blues legend Lead Belly for a woozy, heat-hazed feel, Fogerty's lead guitar is contrasted with Stu Cook's dry-as-dust bass and Doug Clifford's rock-solid rhythm. With the latter hitting the crash cymbals every second and fourth beat, they achieve a primal, elemental pulse over which Fogerty delivers an origin tale steeped in Southern gothic.

Having been told by his "*poppa*" to refuse to compromise his ideals ("*Don't let the man get you/Do what he done to me*") and established his none-more-American credentials ("*I can remember the fourth of July/Running through the backwoods bay*"), an instrumental section leads into the cowbell-driven third verse, which finds him "*rollin' with some Cajun queen*", before a repeat of the first verse sees the song shimmer into the sunset after five minutes and 14 exquisite seconds.

Having set the scene, "Bootleg" reminds us of Creedence's good-time credentials. A percussive ode to the allure of anything once it's made illicit ("*See how good the water tastes/When you can't have any at all*"), it's a moonshine groove of the first order, its propulsive energy derived from the twin acoustic guitars (played by Tom and John) and John's call-and-response vocal.

After this moment of light relief, the tension is ramped up with "Graveyard Train". Recorded in a darkened studio to achieve a suitably spooked atmosphere, it's a near-eight-minute blues track taking cues from Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning", with shades of the Creedence debut's "Gloomy". Over a tightrope-taut backing built on Clifford's staccato snare beat, Fogerty growls, "*On the highway/Thirty people lost their lives*", before a Hades-hot harmonica solo and a sizzling lead break remind us that he's delivering his vocal from beyond the grave.

The mood shifts again for "Good Golly, Miss Molly", an electrifying cover of the rock'n'roll standard written by John Marascalco and Robert "Bumps" Blackwell and popularised by Little Richard. In Creedence's hands, it's three

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Leader John Fogerty's guitar and singing reek of the blues and yet could not be strictly categorised as such... Together the group gets a big, big sound and cunningly uses purely rhythmic passages to build a type of rhythmic monotony which adds to the effect of release when John Fogerty's fluent guitar takes over."

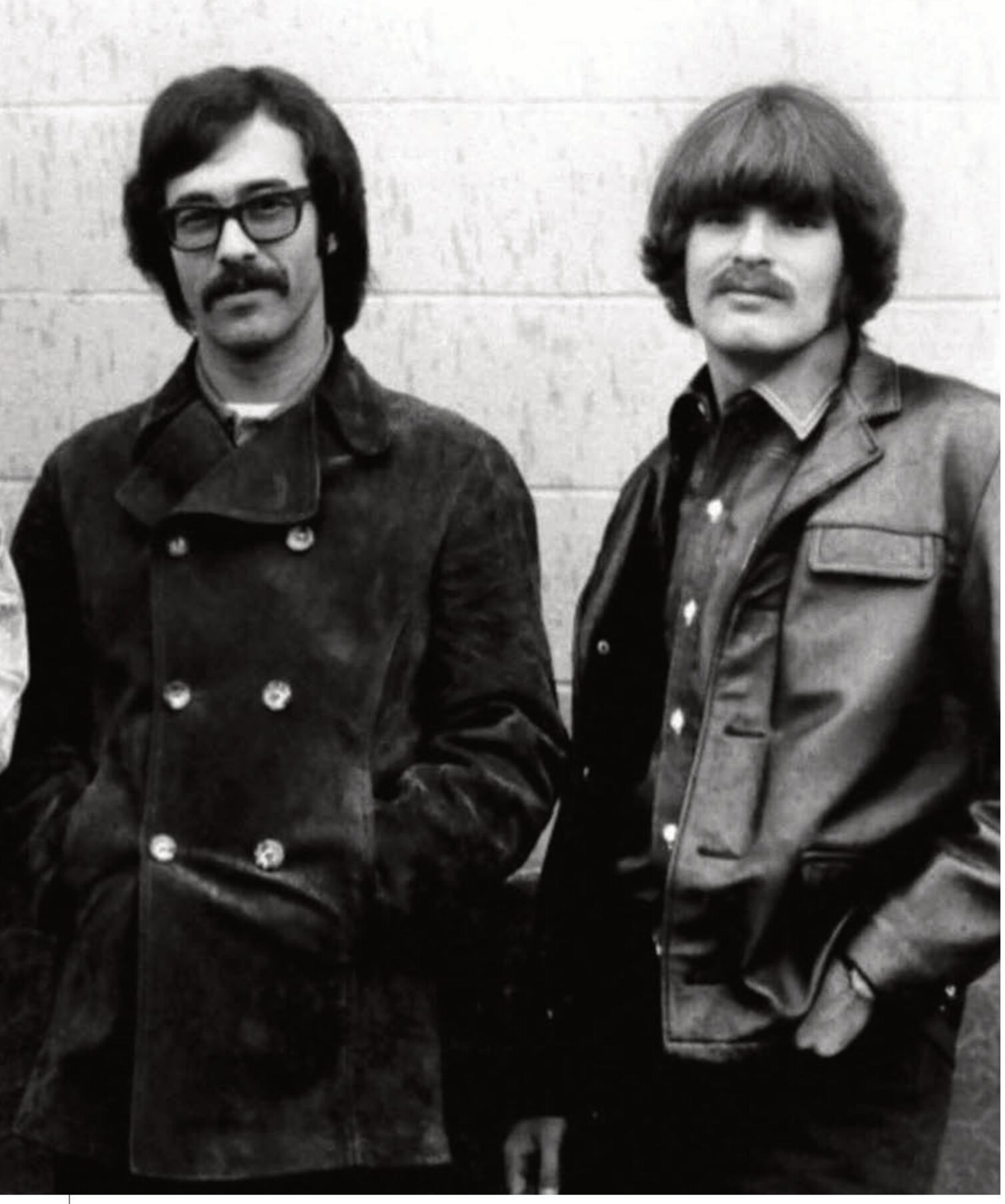
BOB DAWBARN, MM, 5/7/1969

"A deep, rhythmic sound here, as John Fogerty gives himself a sore throat thrashing out a raw vocal about being 'Born On The Bayou', which then becomes a fascinating instrumental piece, until he begins shouting again... Good gutsy LP."

ALLEN EVANS, NME, 5/7/1969

CCR in 1968: presenting an album that "just lands very authoritatively"

ARCHIVE PL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



"Bootleg" reminds us of the allure of anything once it's illicit

minutes of raw energy; Fogerty's visceral lead guitar breaks are triumphs of feel over virtuosity.

"Penthouse Pauper" provided further proof of Fogerty's growing abilities as a composer. A progression from their debut's "The Working Man" written during his creative purple patch before they entered the studio, it's a peacock strut of the first order, the singer rasping cocksure lines like "*If I was a guitar player/I'd have to play the blues*" in between firing off molten lead lines like a one-man Page and Plant.

Even this, however, is eclipsed by what comes next.

With a central refrain written by Fogerty in early 1968, two days after he received his honourable discharge from the army, "Proud Mary" has since become one of the pillars of American pop, covered over 100 times by everyone from Elvis and (most famously) Ike and Tina Turner to Beyoncé. Originally conceived as a song about a maid working for a rich family, it gained its lyrical focus when the group were watching the western-themed television show *Maverick* and bassist Stu Cook remarked, "Hey riverboat, blow your bell."

Amending the lyrics he'd already written so that "Proud Mary" became the name of a boat, he used a rhythmic guitar part inspired by Booker T & The MG's' Steve Cropper to emulate the sound of a wheel powering a Mississippi paddlesteamer. However, when his bandmates were unable to replicate the gospel feel of acts such as The Swan Silvertones and The Sensational Nightingales on the chorus harmonies, Fogerty sent them to local restaurant Two Guys From Italy and spent 45 minutes redoing them himself.

"I'd been doin' that for years with my tape recorder at home," recalled the singer of the incident. "I knew harmony, and the other guys, frankly, did not. We literally coulda broke up right there."

The end result, however, was worth the fall-out. A timeless celebration of simple living and not looking back ("*Left a good job in the city/Workin' for the man ev'ry night and day/And I never lost one minute of sleepin'/Worryin' 'bout the way things might have been*"), "Proud Mary" tapped into an American yearning for freedom stretching back via Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* and Mark Twain's *Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* to the poems of Walt Whitman. "At the conclusion of "Proud Mary', I even said to myself, 'Wow, that's my first standard,'" he later recalled.

For the album's closing track, Fogerty deliberately wrote an extended jam in the style of local rivals the Grateful Dead. A one-chord groove built on Doug Clifford's shuffle-beat rhythm, "Keep On Chooglin'" spoke to a blue-collar audience as directly as the band's uniform of jeans and plaid shirts. A million light years from the grandstanding of their peers, it provides the final part of the album's swamp-rock triptych, Fogerty hollering, "*Maybe you don't understand it/But if you're natural man/You got to ball and have a good time*" over a feverish backdrop of squalling harmonica, white-hot lead lines and vocal howls.

RELEASED in January 1969 – in a blurred sleeve that only added to the intrigue – *Bayou Country*'s perfectly crafted songs about a mythical South struck a chord in a country increasingly eager to forget everyday reality. Building on the momentum created by the success of the single "Proud Mary"/"Born On The Bayou" (it was only denied the No 1 spot by Tommy Roe's "Dizzy"), *Bayou Country* steadily climbed the charts, peaking at No 7 in May, the same week that follow-up album *Green River*'s "Bad Moon Rising" entered the singles chart.

"*Bayou Country* really stated what Creedence Clearwater Revival was and should be," recalled Fogerty. "There were hints of it on the first album. The singin' is good, and the band plays well; it just doesn't sound as authentic as Stax. But *Bayou Country* just lands very authoritatively." The most exhilarating hot streak in pop history had begun.

TRACKMARKS BAYOU COUNTRY

1. Born On The Bayou ★★★★★
2. Bootleg ★★★
3. Graveyard Train ★★★
4. Good Golly, Miss Molly ★★★
5. Penthouse Pauper ★★★★
6. Proud Mary ★★★★★
7. Keep On Chooglin' ★★★

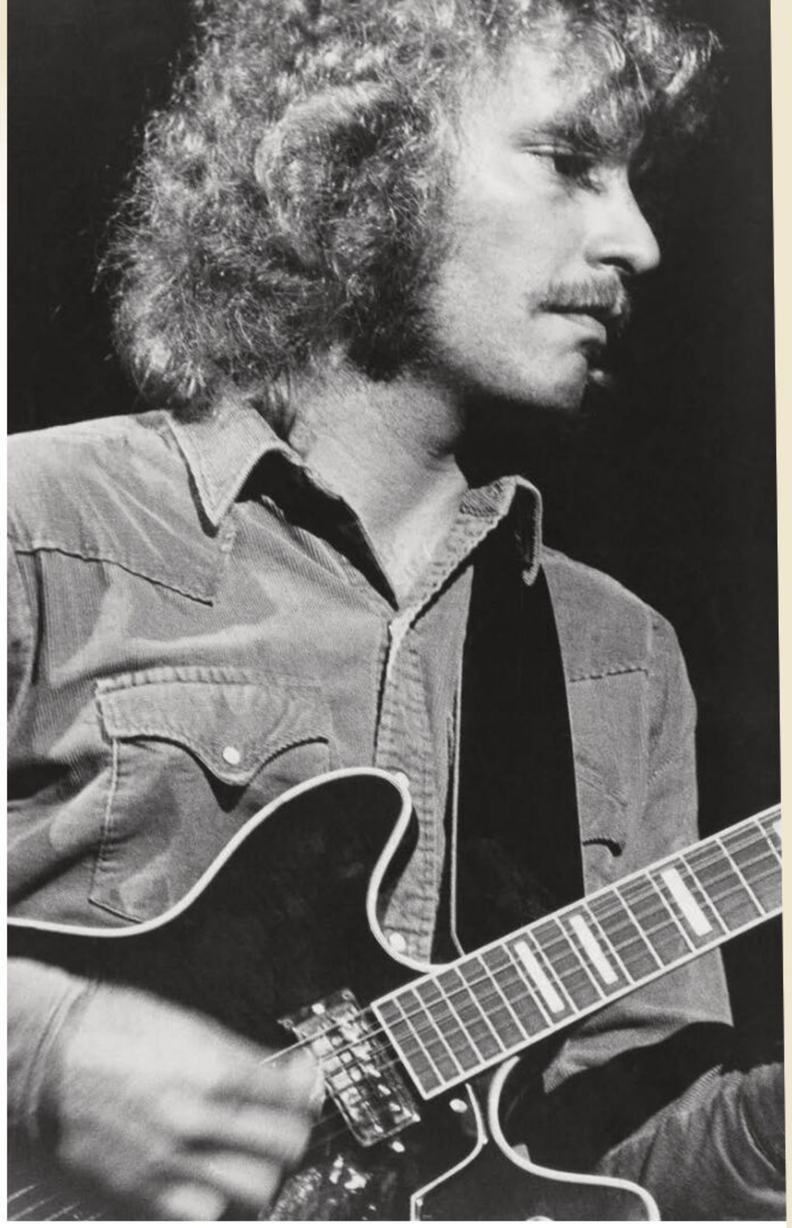
Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: RCA Studios, LA
Personnel: John Fogerty (lead vocals, lead guitar, backing vocals, harmonica, piano, percussion), Tom Fogerty (backing vocals, rhythm guitar), Stu Cook (bass guitar), Doug Clifford (drums)
Highest chart position: UK 62; US 7

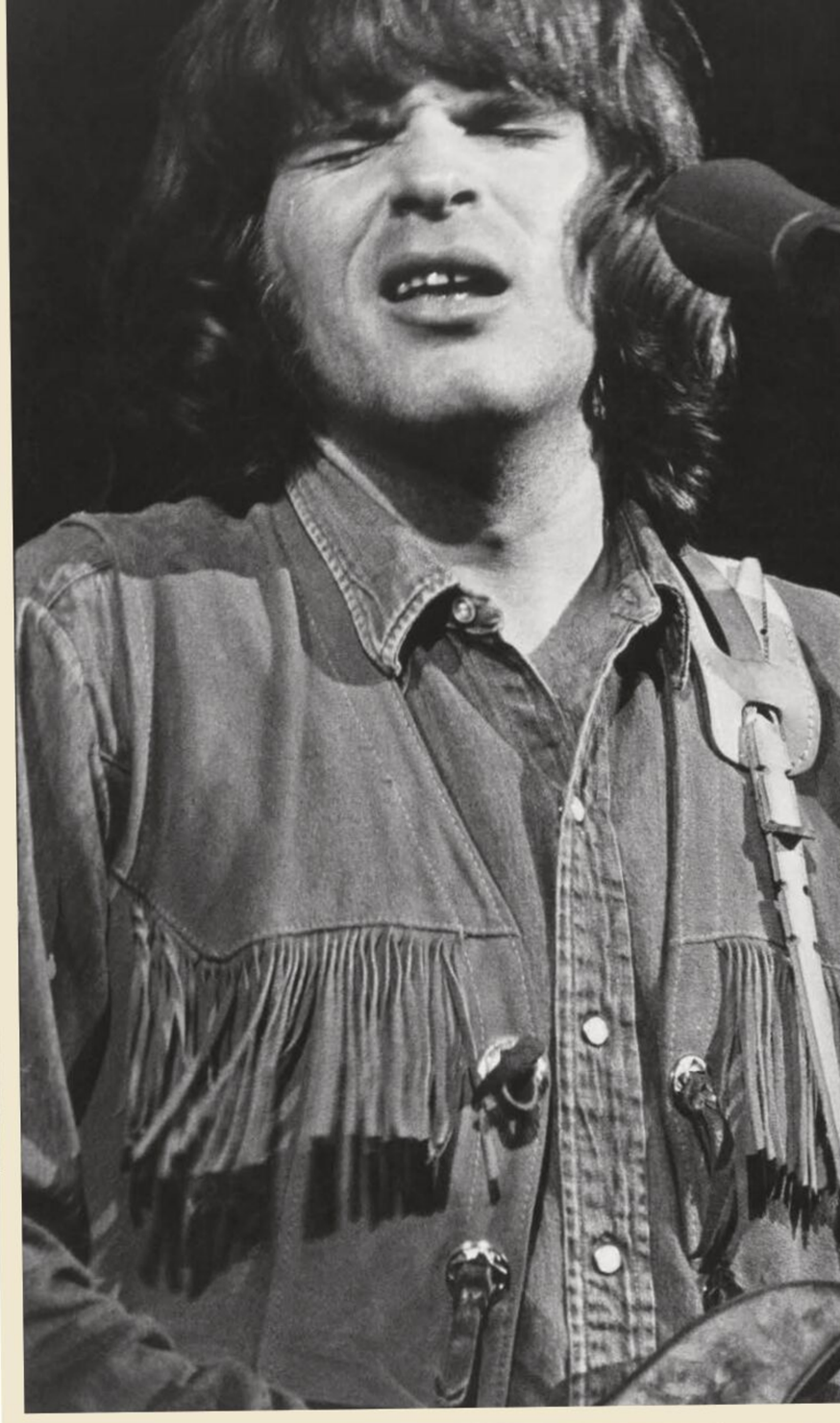
"WE CALL IT ROCK'N'ROLL AND THAT'S ENOUGH FOR US"

Even before they visit, *CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL* fire the UK imagination with their visionary Southern music – from San Francisco. The band, claims *John Fogerty*, are uncomplicated people, making rootsy rock, "not like boring psychedelic bands". "When I say a hurricane is coming," he says, "that's what I mean."

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

CCR in 1968: (l–r) Doug Clifford, Stu Cook, John Fogerty and Tom Fogerty





MELODY MAKER 21/06/1969

TEN years is a long time for anybody to wait for a hit, but that's how long Creedence Clearwater Revival waited to see their name in the British and American charts with "Proud Mary". The single is a track from their *Bayou Country* LP to be released here soon and this will be their second album to be issued here. The sound of Creedence Clearwater Revival has an earthy, basic feel about it and the group's leader, guitarist, harmonica player and songwriter says, "The sound comes from Louisiana."

Certainly on tracks such as "Born On The Bayou", "Bootleg" and "Graveyard Train", there's a peculiarly Southern feel about the sound with hints of blues, country and Cajun music in what Creedence Clearwater play. Explains leader John Fogerty, "I just had this life-long dream I wanted to live there. All the great records or people who made them somehow came from Memphis or Louisiana or somewhere along the Mississippi River in between.

"I never even thought about social pressures. To me it just represented something earlier, like 1807, before computers and machinery complicated everything, when things were relaxed and calm. And singers like Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters gave me the feeling that they were right there, standing by the river.

"Carl Perkins, the first one who ever made me think about being a musician and singer, made his greatest records there by the river in Memphis. I really enjoyed the whole Southern folk legend... Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, the River and all that went with it. The River and the South just seem to be where all the music that's kicked everything off started from or sounds like."

The Bayou country is a long way from San Francisco, where the group originally got together – John Fogerty, with his brother Tom, drummer Doug Clifford and bass guitarist Stu Cook in 1959. The group began by playing blues and then went through various scenes backing other singers and working in the San Francisco area.

After a bout of duty in the army, John rejoined the group in 1967. They worked together as The Golliwogs for a while, then changed their name to Creedence, which also brought them a change of fortune. In 1968 the group released a single called "Suzie Q" which made the American chart and followed it up with a version of the Screamin' Jay Hawkins classic "I Put A Spell On You", both singles being included on their first album. And then came "Proud Mary" and the Bayou Beat of Creedence Clearwater Revival became an international sound.

Currently the group are working on their third album and are hoping soon to visit Britain.

"I think the best way is with a hit," comments John Fogerty. "We'd like to come as soon as possible. The sooner we get over the better it'll be. I don't know how our music will go over."

Certainly it has impressed American audiences like the Fillmores East and West and John thinks the American audiences are probably the best in the world. But does he have a great deal of respect for British bands? "They seem so much better than American bands. They seem better trained. And they play incredibly fast."

If Creedence Clearwater Revival are as good live as they are on record, they need not worry about British bands. They are one of the most exciting groups to come out of America and have managed to come up with a distinctive sound – the Bayou Beat.

TONY WILSON

NME 20/09/1969

"BAYOU Rock? It means absolutely nothing to me." Having heard so many definitions of the gutsy, foot-stomping rock of Creedence Clearwater Revival, all of them coming back to the label 'Bayou Rock', it came as something of a surprise to pick up that statement from the group's leader and songwriter John Fogerty over the transatlantic phone line this week.

Speaking from the group's record company offices in San Francisco, John went on: "I suppose my songs do have derivative rhythms but it is mostly accidental. My thing with Southern music has always been with the people of the South; people like Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Howlin' Wolf."

How does he account for their success? – "I don't try to. I have seen a lot of things written in the papers about it being a folk rock revival, a rock'n'roll revival and, the latest, a blues revival. I don't know about any of them. What we do have is a pretty basic rock approach to our music. We call it rock'n'roll and that's enough for us."

But he did agree that their success rested largely on the appeal of their music to both a dancing and a thinking audience. "That's true. First of all it's rock'n'roll. Its function is to move you whatever. Then you can put the frosting on the cake. Words that make you think; guitars that are growling or funky, and so on. That's the way we go about it. Music is emotional. When you lose that and it becomes ultra-sophisticated and mathematically precise it leaves me dry."

John was delighted with the news that "Bad Moon Rising" was then at No 2 in the *NME* chart, poised to take over at No 1. "Someone here told me about it but it's easier to believe when you hear it from somebody actually in England." And what of "Bad Moon Rising"? "It is not drug-orientated or political," he said firmly, then explained. "Somebody wrote that I sang about 'grass' and that it was an allusion to marijuana, but that's not in there at all."

Others take it that it means the right wing is dissolving, or the left wing is dissolving, whatever your views.

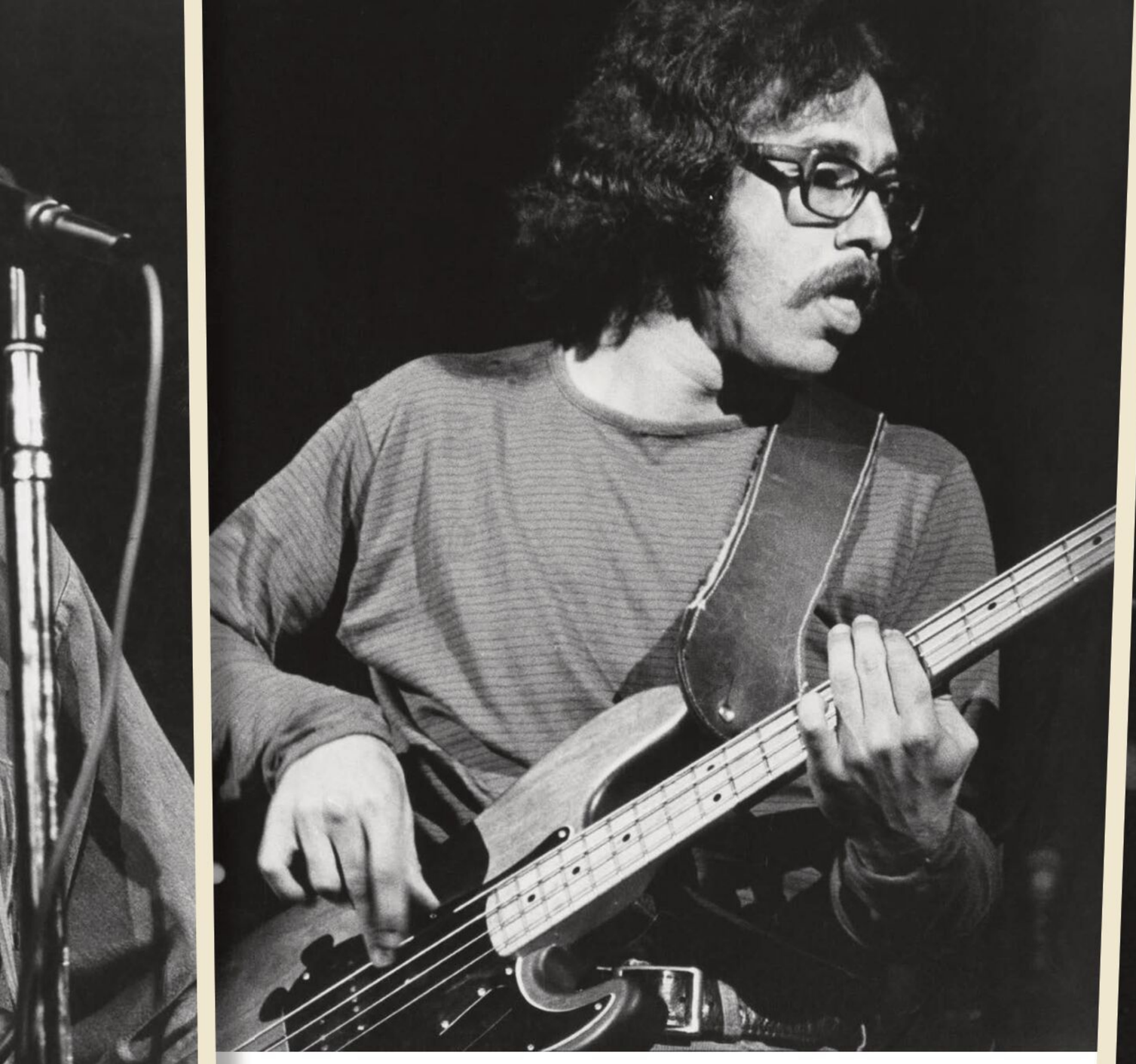
"When I say a hurricane is coming that's exactly what I mean. It is just a story about natural catastrophes, which are so big that they can override the personal ones."

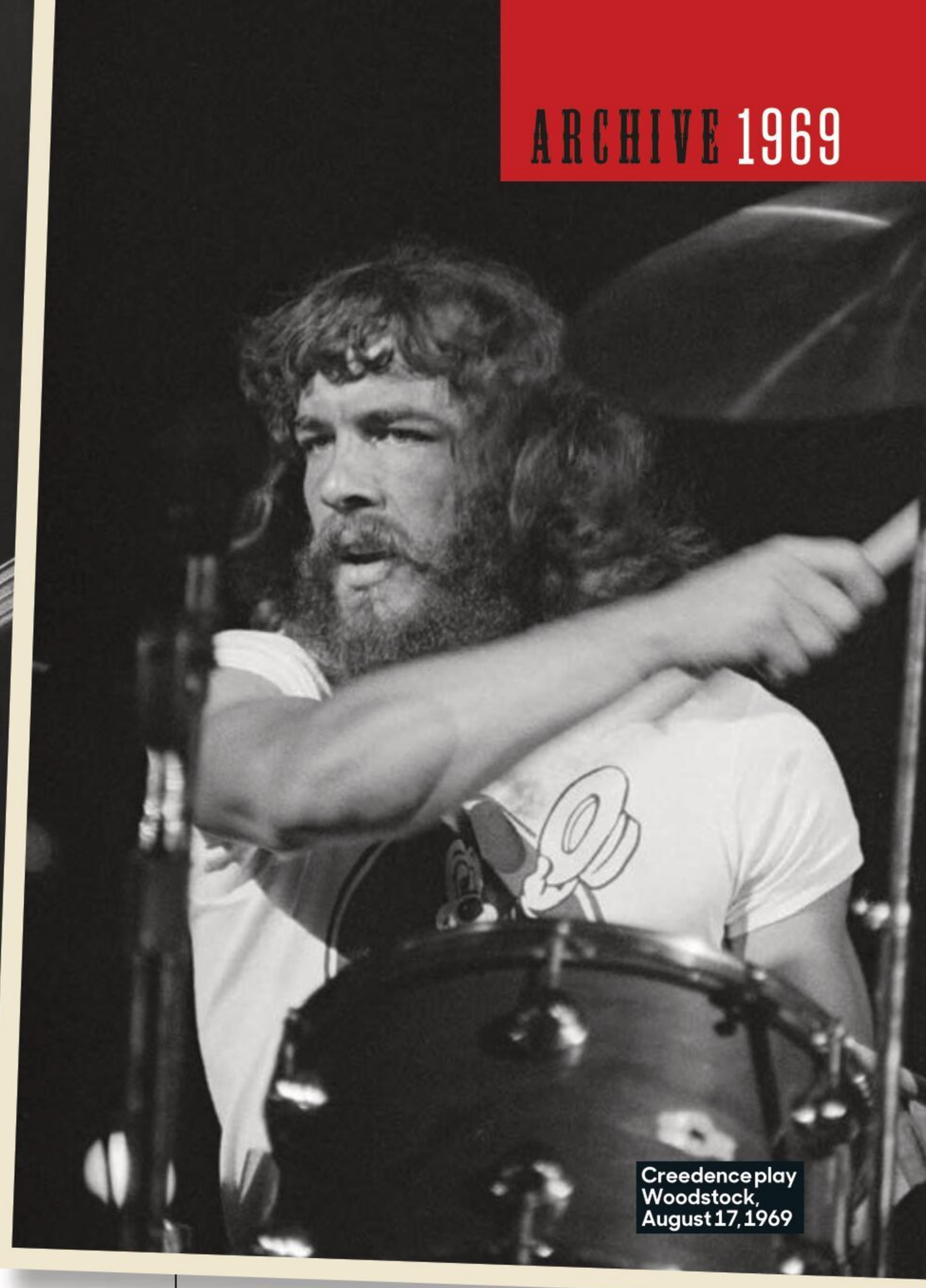
Misinterpretations of "Bad Moon" apart, John affirmed there was some political and social comment in their music: "There is in quite a few of the songs. People used to say that all the words of your songs are simple and that used to bug me.

"Since I don't go in for 18-letter words like insurrection and resurrection etcetera some people tend to overlook the meaning of the lyrics. All that 'Canyons of your mind exploding' stuff – that is a load of rubbish to me. But quite a few of our songs are socially and politically inclined."

"I REALLY ENJOYED THE WHOLE SOUTHERN FOLK LEGEND"

John Fogerty





Creedence play Woodstock, August 17, 1969

The good sun is now shining over Creedence Clearwater Revival... but it wasn't always that way. They've been together now for a decade with the same lineup – a considerable feat in these times of break-ups and splits – but along the way, at various moments, hurdles have presented themselves which might have broken up many a group.

Fogerty, at the age of 14, drummer Doug Clifford and bassist Stu Cook formed the group at junior high school in California, 1959. Tom Fogerty, brother of John, joined later. "Early on, there were different schools we went to and families planning to move away," recalled John. "We managed to persuade them not to. We wanted to do what we are doing now more than anything else in life and that's what kept us going. We drifted apart and went off to different schools but we never disbanded the group."

Later on came one of the biggest hurdles when John and Doug were drafted into the US army – and straight away decided they wanted out.

"We were in the reserve towards the end of our service," said John, "and we still kept the group going, travelling to dates 200/300 miles from the base and returning during the early morning. We managed to get out in the end: both with honourable discharges. There are many ways of avoiding the military, most of them involving going to jail, but we managed to fall somewhere in the middle."

MARRIAGE was recounted by John as another problem. He, Tom and Doug are the married members; Tom with two children, him with one. Then there was 'the real smart manager' who named them The Golliwogs and gave them funny hats to wear – and then there was poverty.

"We didn't have any money to buy strings for guitars, or amps or anything. It wasn't until the end of 1967 that the president of the record company came up with enough money to get us some equipment. It wasn't extravagant – we got one amp for $1,400 and a drum stool for Doug. The company wasn't that much in the black that they could lash out – and that was one of the best things that ever happened to us."

I asked John for a word or two on the members of the group. What sort of character was Doug, for instance? "That's the word. A character," he replied. "Doug is the funny one. Even though we don't make a great deal out of being funny on stage – we don't have an act – he is the one with most of the funny stories. He is the one finding humour in the most oppressive situations."

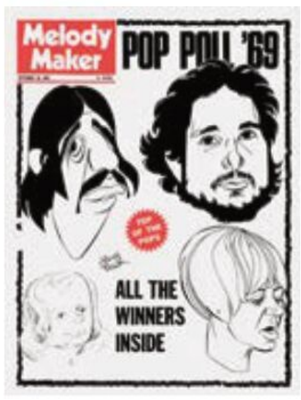
Stu? "Probably the most left wing of all of us. He is quite a bit into the San Francisco scene as a musician and philosopher." Tom? "He's probably the most intense of the four; like very serious or sincere. He is the most likely to say what he is really feeling. Like right out of nowhere he will say something that is so honest people cannot believe what he has said."

John dodged talking about himself but said: "Since we have been together for so long we are all each other's best friends. We are pretty tight; we have our own little circle with few friends from outside."

Is that why they've stayed together so long? – "It's a two-way street," he replied. "The longer you are together the easier it becomes to get over any problems you have, because you have come up against and surmounted them before. It was because of over-riding these problems that we have got where we are today."

NICK LOGAN

MELODY MAKER 20/09/1969



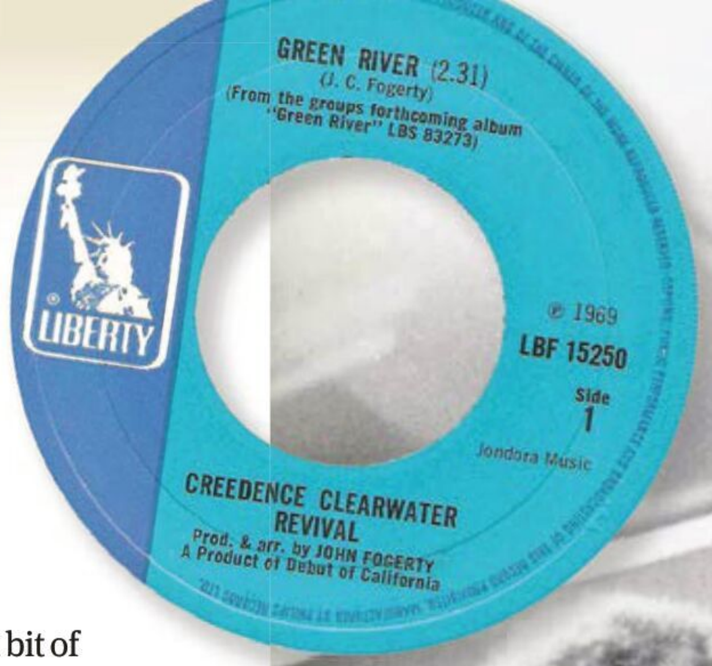
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL took just five weeks to make the No 1 spot in the *MM* Pop 30 this week with "Bad Moon Rising". This great rocking song is the follow-up to their first British hit, "Proud Mary", a track from Creedence's *Bayou Country* LP, and like "Proud Mary" it scored heavily in the US as well.

"Bad Moon Rising" is a typical Creedence Clearwater song and a good example of what a hit should sound like, comprising a strong lyric, a simple but effective melody line, a driving beat and quality production.

"It's not a personal story," said Creedence leader, guitarist and singer John Fogerty when he spoke to *Melody Maker* from California. "And it's not political. It's just meant to be a statement on the good and bad sides of life. It's not a protest song, like the sort of protest songs we've had over the last few years. Just a sort of 'Beware' type thing, mostly about natural catastrophes. The words were meant to mean exactly what I wrote."

As well as the two singles, Creedence Clearwater have had two albums released in Britain, *Creedence Clearwater Revival* and *Bayou Country* and their third was recently issu ed in America, *Green River*, the title track of which is their ➤

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

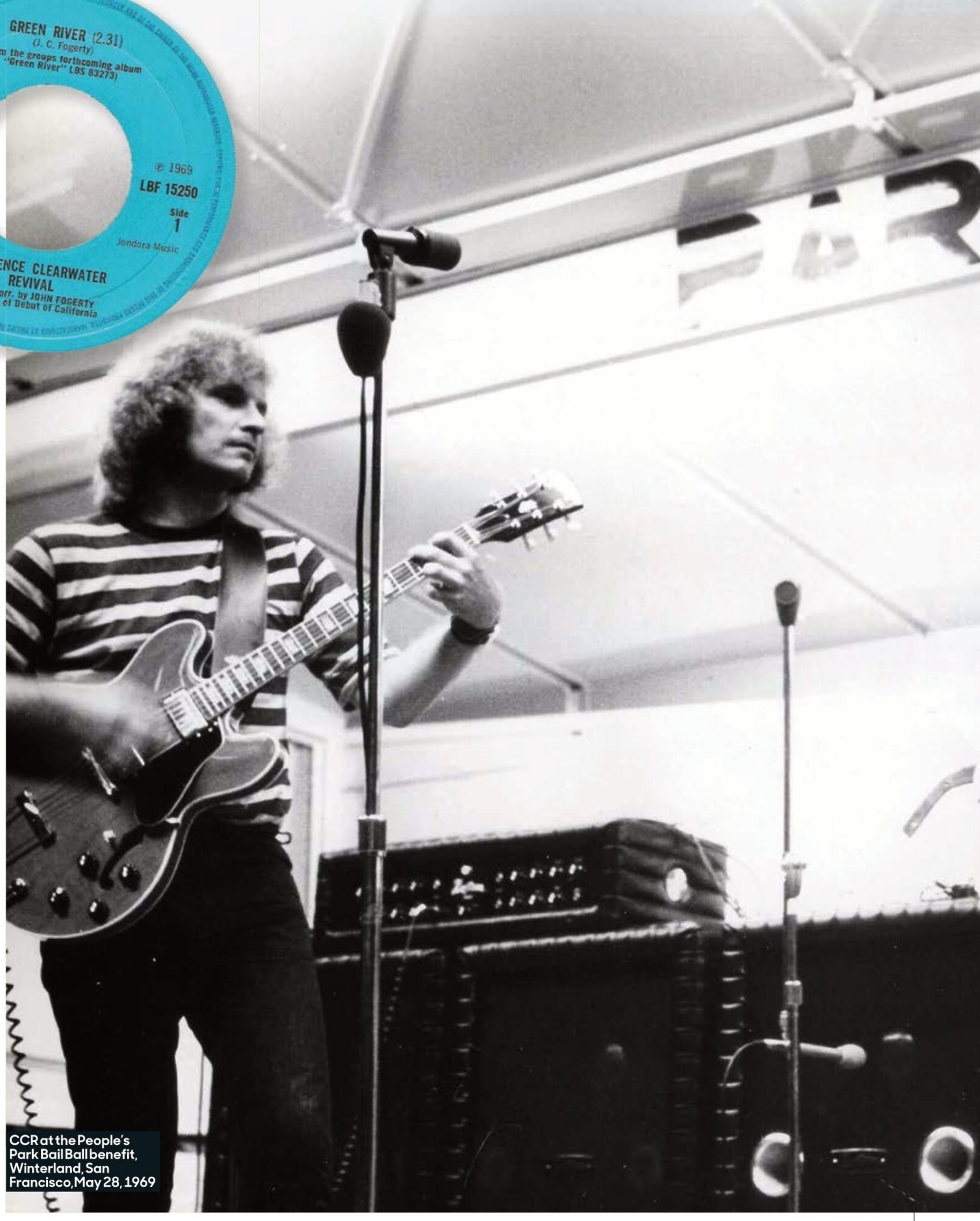


latest single hit in the US.

"It's basically the same sound," commented John. "I find it hard to make definitions about our music. It's the same instrumentation, with a bit of harmonic and electric piano, but mostly guitars."

The Creedence sound reflects many influences – blues, rock, country and the Cajun style of Louisiana. The music has a Southern feel to it although the band originally came from San Francisco, where John, his guitar-playing brother Tom, drummer Doug Clifford and bass guitarist Stu Cook teamed up in 1959.

For 10 years they played blues and rock in and around San Francisco area under the name of the Golliwogs. The group split for a while when John went into the army but reformed in 1967 as Creedence Clearwater Revival. In 1968 they had their first American chart entries with "Suzie Q" and the Screamin' Jay Hawkins classic "I Put A Spell On You", both singles being incorporated in their first album.



CCR at the People's Park Bail Ball benefit, Winterland, San Francisco, May 28, 1969

THE Creedence sound is distinctive and interesting with enough going on in it to keep the listener's attention. "Our basic sound doesn't change," said John, "but delivery changes. As with anyone who writes songs, I go off on tangents. But this is the kind of music I wanted to bring to the fore. The kind of music I most respect. But we do try and change just a bit."

Did the group have much trouble in recreating their recorded sound on stage? "In our case we make our records sound like we do on stage," answered John. "We try to record exactly the way we play, therefore, in person, people say we sound just like we do on record. We expand here and there and ad lib but not to the point of being boring like psychedelic bands.

"Of course, the tape echo we get in a studio is impossible to do on stage. But there is usually a natural echo in the halls we play. If we did the tape echo in person, nobody would understand what we were saying,"

The group have had a number of favourable reports regarding their live appearances, particularly with regard to their overall stage balance. "We try to get a clean, clear effect," stated John when questioned about this. "The idea is that every instrument is to be heard, after all; every guy in the band has the right to be heard if he's playing. If you turn up the amps, well it might be good for the amplifier people and please them and it might be exciting to watch them explode, but I just distorts everything. We like the rhythm section to be clean so the lead vocals and guitar are heard against a clean blanket of sound."

The group are now in the fortunate position of being able to limit their personal appearances although they are still kept busy with rehearsing and recording. "We are slowing down a bit," said John. "We've been on and off the road since January. We're playing about two or three times a month until the end of the year. Song writing takes up a fair amount of time, and we do television appearances and at the moment we are recording our fourth, and possibly our fifth album. We've shifted our interests but we're still as busy as we were. Business-wise, we have more appointments with accountants and companies but they come in spurts. We might have four weeks when nothing happens and then we have to see them all in a couple of days. We rehearse all week and take Saturday and Sunday off, unless we're working. We usually work at weekends."

"PEOPLE SAID WE WERE ACID ROCK. THAT WASN'T SO – WE WERE INTO THE OLD SOUNDS"

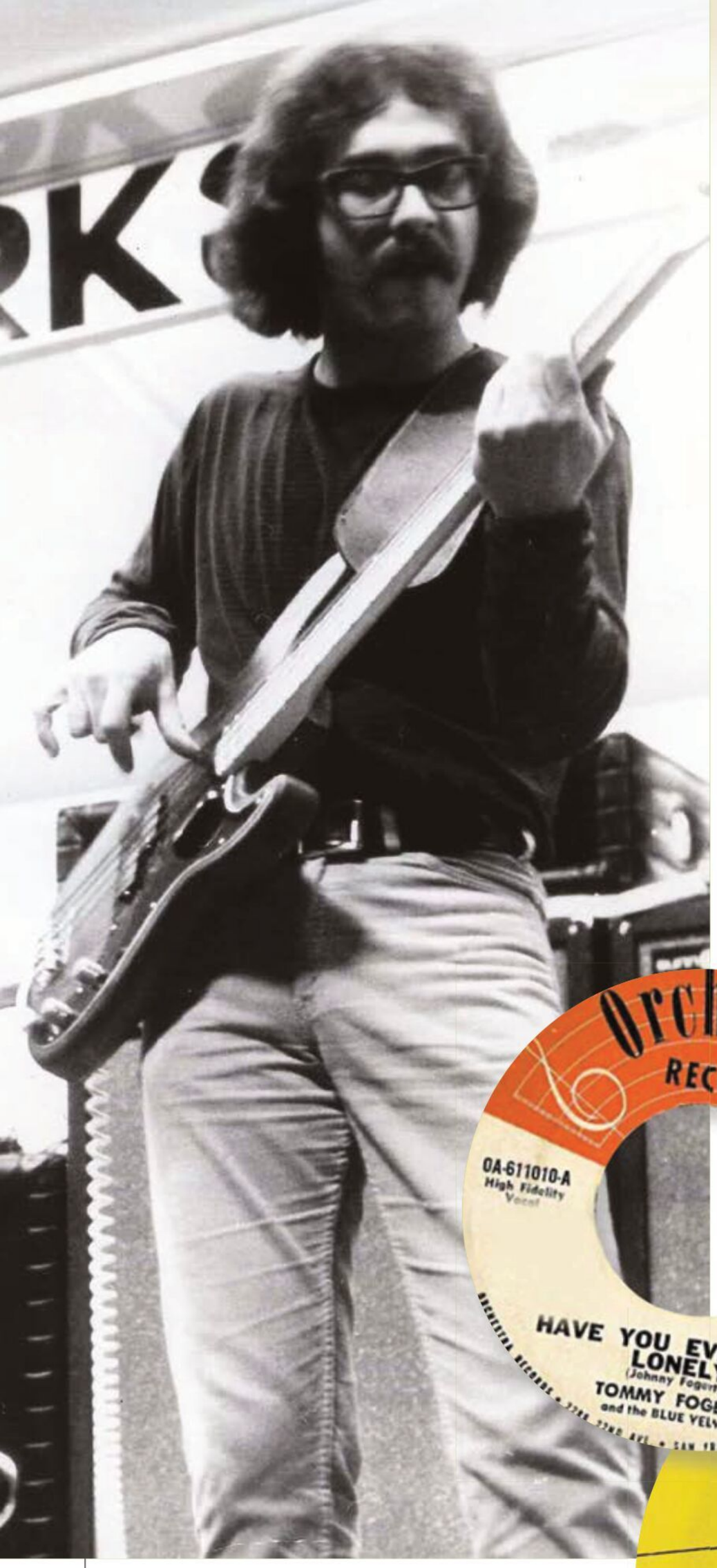
John Fogerty

Unlike some groups who take success as a signal to stop working and to rest on their laurels, Creedence Clearwater Revival are firm believers in keeping their music in shape in readiness for the next gig, whenever it might be. Getting stale musically is something John and the group want to avoid.

"We've noticed with some bands that when they make it, they take it easy. When you stop appearing and stop rehearsing, it's a drag because when you got to play somewhere it's just like rehearsing. Nothing is together. So we're going to keep rehearsing."

One advantage that John is able to use now is the prerogative to pick venues. "Most of the halls in this country are dumpy, awful," he said. "They're bad in some way or another; you can't hear the voice or the lights are too dim,

ZUMA PRESS, INC. / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



something like that. With success, you are able to pick and choose more. If I could pick only the good venues that I like playing, they wouldn't amount to more than about 15. Also you've got more time to rehearse. We've noticed with some bands, they play the same old things for a year and after a while any song gets stale."

With two hit singles in Britain so far, and on the strength of that it wouldn't be unreasonable to predict a potential third with "Green River", it would seem a British tour for Creedence Clearwater Revival must be the next item on their list.

"We have no definite plans as far as that's concerned," said John, "but I think if we came it would be around March, when the weather is clearer. It's the first thing we're thinking of in terms of next year. If we come to England, I'd like to stay a while, at least two weeks, and get there a couple or three days before we actually play so we can get used to the place. I don't like hopping-about tours. I don't think we'd go to Europe, we'd come straight to England."

TONY WILSON

NME 29/11/1969

BRITISH rockers don't regard what Creedence Clearwater Revival play as rock'n'roll, but it's the nearest any contemporary American band has come to that music lately and this probably accounts for much of the group's success.

Lead singer is John Fogerty, who recalls a time in 1964 when he was so ashamed of his singing he didn't know what to do. He had joined a group called The Blue Velvets, which played weekend fraternity parties for 18 months in the San Francisco area.

The beginnings of Clearwater can be tracked back to early 1959 when John and drummer Doug Clifford got hold of bassist Stu Cook and John's big brother Tom to sing lead.

"We were listening to Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Screamin' Jay Hawkins and people like that," John said. "A number of people said we were an acid rock band, but that wasn't so, we were into the old sounds."

The group's first record, "Beverly Angel", sounded dated and of that occurrence John stated: "That was when we really knew that the older type of music meant more to us than new tunes."

The next few records didn't do a thing, so The Blue Velvets signed a new contract and, to their great surprise, found themselves called The Golliwogs on the label.

"We played small clubs in the San Francisco Bay for 10 dollars a night plus all the beer we could drink," John revealed. "We'd changed our name to Creedence Clearwater Revival but I was apprehensive about playing in San Francisco because we'd been so bad for a long time."

Like a lot of British bands who get a club residency, Clearwater found themselves building up a huge reputation without making any records under their new name.

"We still didn't do new stuff, we stuck to the old sound which is fantastic," John pointed out. "You could get a better sound than some of the old records had, but, basically, the songs were so much better than what's coming out today. A lot of groups were doing their freakouts, but we stuck to rock'n'roll and found that people were taking notice."

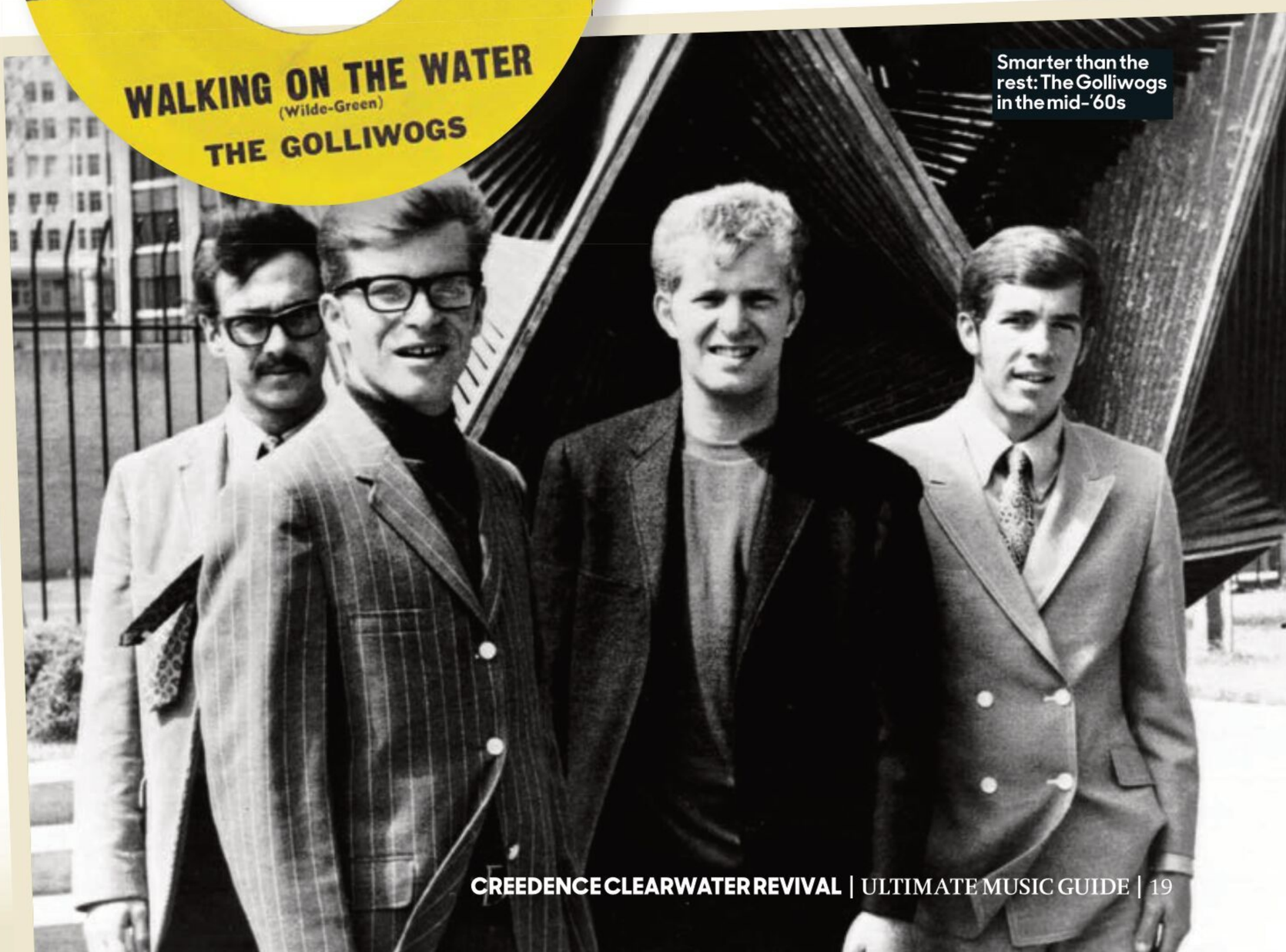
Even so, those days weren't particularly easy going and John sang very high to make himself heard about the din. He frequently suffered from a sore throat and was near to collapse on many occasions at the end of a gig. Having no public address system didn't help much either.

"I remember one of the first numbers I learned to bawl out was 'Hully Gully'," he said, "and in the end my throat got used to it and became more powerful."

John was doing a lot of writing and almost all the group's recordings have been his compositions. He still writes as though he were living in Memphis in 1956 instead of San Francisco in 1969, but likes that type of music better. So, it seems, do a lot of other people – the group now has six gold records, has done five TV spectaculars so far this year and earned over one million dollars.

Not bad for a rock'n'roll band.

RICHARD GREEN



Smarter than the rest: The Golliwogs in the mid-'60s

GETTY IMAGES

Released: AUGUST 3, 1969

GREEN RIVER

A bad moon rises, but as the 1960s die Creedence kick up its dust. From apocalyptic foot-stomper to hobo hootenanny, fear, compassion and disillusionment push the band to definitive heights. ***By Andrew Mueller***

RARELY, if ever, has a harbinger of impending apocalypse sounded quite so jaunty. Track one, side two, of *Green River* begins with a chuckling three-chord chug of guitar, swiftly followed by a four-square drum-thump that might have been calculated to fill a barn floor with boots stomping along to some rousing, good-timey rafter-raiser about beer and/or fishing. This benign illusion is allowed to shimmer maybe another two seconds before John Fogerty steps to the mic. "*I see*", he announces in that unmistakable twanging yowl, half medicine show huckster, half revival preacher, "*a bad moon rising*".

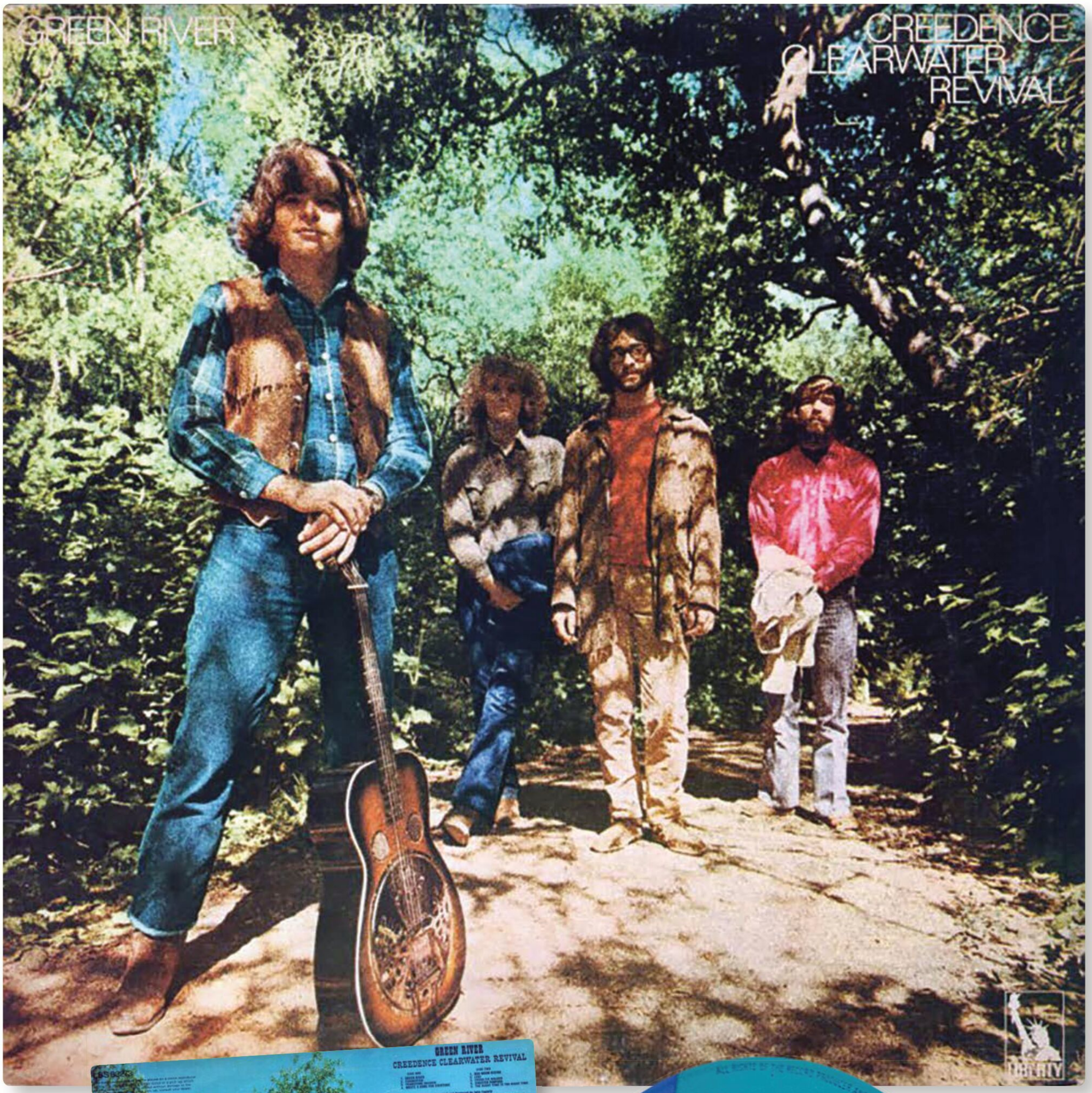
It's Creedence Clearwater Revival's most famous song, since dropped into dozens of films and television soundtracks to denote the puncturing of the idealism of the 1960s, the degeneration of hippiedom, American hubris more generally, or whatever queasy intimations of an incipient unravelling you're having yourself. (Of the many, many cover versions of "Bad Moon Rising", the two that most adroitly embrace its sense of gloomy portent are by Australian art-rock weirdos The Reels, who played it as a slowed-down, string-drenched, timpani-punctuated pop hymn, a blissful resignation to oblivion, and by Colorado alt.country hot gospellers 16 Horsepower, who went full-blown gothic prophecy of hellfire.)

Fogerty later said he was thinking, as he wrote, of the 1968 assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy – which seemed to many, at the time, like the literal death of such social progress as had been made in the 1960s. He conjured the song from a phrase that had just come to him, which became the title, and the 1941 film *The Devil & Daniel Webster*, a schlocky, noirish retelling of the fable of Faust – the trading of one's eternal soul to Satan for short-term advantage in this world. But whether Fogerty swung for it deliberately or not, "Bad Moon Rising" tapped into a much deeper seam than that – "*one eye is taken for an eye*", as a threat of reaping what you sow, springs from the Code Of Hammurabi, written in Babylon about 37 centuries before Fogerty helped himself to it.

"Bad Moon Rising" was one of those rare songs that sounded instantly eternal – if we hadn't been singing it forever before now, we surely would henceforth. A moment of such piercing clarity can drown out the rest of an artist's entire output, never mind a single album. But such was the roll that CCR were on at this point that it's not even the best thing on *Green River*.

Creedence Clearwater Revival's third album appeared during a period of ➤

"Bad Moon Rising" was one of those rare songs that sounded instantly eternal


GREEN RIVER
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
LIBERTY

GREEN RIVER
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Liberty Records

GREEN RIVER
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Produced & arranged by JOHN FOGERTY
A PRODUCT OF DEBUT OF CALIFORNIA
STEREO
℗ 1969
LBS 83273
Side 1
1. GREEN RIVER 2.31
2. COMMOTION 2.37
3. TOMBSTONE SHADOW 3.36
4. WROTE A SONG FOR EVERYONE 4.55
(Fogerty) Jondora Music
LIBERTY

John Fogerty (left) looks ahead on "Lodi" as CCR release their second of three albums in 1969

astounding fecundity for the group, remarkable even by the frantic standards of 1960s rock'n'roll: it was the second of three albums Creedence released in 1969 alone. This demented turnover serves *Green River* well, however. With neither time nor inclination to overthink anything, CCR rattle through the running order with a positively punk rock terseness, and no listener should be left feeling short-changed by a running time that falls narrowly short of 30 minutes – it is as eventful a half-hour as was ever committed to tape.

The title track is also the album's opening track and, especially in that setting, sounds more than any other single CCR song like a summation of their vision. Just as CCR were, essentially, a bunch of kids from the drearier suburbs of San Francisco Bay cosplaying as drawling, y'alling, alligator-wrestling good ol' boys from the swamps of Louisiana, so "Green River" – by John Fogerty's later admission – is a relocation of a childhood memory of a holiday in rural California to a point several states south-east.

Buoyed by a basic riff that might have been designed to soundtrack any budding guitarist's first afternoon of ownership of their instrument, "Green River" is also everything that was great about Creedence at their peak, the band's exuberant simpatico emphasised by Fogerty's distinctively crisp and unfussy production. At every point of the song, every part of the sum is discretely audible (CCR made a point of arriving in the studio rigorously rehearsed, and recording largely live – each of their first three albums cost less than $2,000 to make, which given the multi-platinum quantities in which they shipped, must rank as one of the most spectacular returns on investment in rock'n'roll history).

It's very arguably to their credit that they leant into their persona with such gusto

CRITICS' VERDICT

"They have honed down their hypnotic Bayou sound to give the perfect edge to John Fogerty's raw, compelling songs. It's the menacing excitement of rock at its unpretentious best, including 'Green River' and 'Bad Moon Rising'."

MELODY MAKER, 22/11/1969

"Commotion" is a nervous, twitchy boogie expressing paranoid bemusement at the furious pace of the modern world ("*Backed up on the freeway/Backed up in the church/Everywhere you look there's a frown*"). Very far from the only time in the CCR catalogue, any unease that they are perhaps trowelling on the poor-simple-country-folk-befuddled-by-the-big-city shtick overly generously – Fogerty absolutely does pronounce "church" as "choich" – is more than offset by the chops and charm with which CCR play it. While it might not always have been fun playing in a band led by so famously focused and exacting a taskmaster as Fogerty, CCR's records of the time never gave the impression that they were having anything other than a total hoot.

"Tombstone Shadow" is hewn from similar material, Fogerty giving it the full lawks-a-lawdy as he unfurls this slinky blues lamenting the prophecies of a five-dollar fortune teller (in this field as elsewhere, it seems, you get what you pay for). It is altogether glorious, the soaring guitar solos reminding that Fogerty shared with – and/or borrowed from – George Harrison a prodigious gift for saying a great deal with just a few notes.

That CCR, in selling themselves as essentially a primordial Southern rock band, were pretending to be something they manifestly were not was never an important or meaningful criticism of them – most artists, certainly within rock and pop, are imposters to at least some degree. It's very arguably to CCR's credit, indeed, that they leant into their persona with such gusto, as they do throughout *Green River*, never more so than on "Cross-Tie Walker".

Musically, "Cross-Tie Walker" is "Bad Moon Rising" redux, though distinguished by a groovy descending bass motif ushering out each chorus. Lyrically it's Fogerty as Steinbeckian hobo, meagre belongings gathered in handkerchief tied to shoulder-mounted branch, hobbling between boxcars in his hole-riddled hobnails ("*Ain't no sand in my pocket/Never do sit down*"). It's guileless, joyous, and defies the most pious purist to prevent their pursed lips from cracking into a grin.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

The not at all dissimilar "Sinister Purpose" is "Bad Moon Rising" redux lyrically, another brood upon the gathering storm. "*When the sky is grey/And the moon is hate/I'll be down to get you/Roots of Earth will shake*", it goes, among other Old Testamentish forebodings; in general, Fogerty was always nearer Hank Williams than Bob Dylan as a lyricist, but he cut a dash with the biblical rhetoric on occasion. Sonically, however, "Sinister Purpose" is much more wilfully sombre than its deceptively upbeat spiritual sibling – it's a snarling rocker hung off a riff half-borrowed from Johnny Kidd & The Pirates' "Shakin' All Over" and lent an added atmosphere of anguish by Fogerty's keening, wailing lead guitar, all at once alarm and siren.

Green River maintained what had become a CCR tradition of acknowledging a formative standard. Previous honorees had included Screamin' Jay Hawkins' "I Put A Spell On You" and Little Richard's "Good Golly, Miss Molly"; among later examples would be the Marvin Gaye hit "Heard It Through The Grapevine" and Huddie Ledbetter's "Cotton Fields". On *Green River*, it was Nappy Brown's "The Night Time Is The Right Time", best known for the 1958 version by Ray Charles. As with other CCR cover versions, their interpretation is principally an exercise in putting rough edges on. Ray Charles had sung it as a suave, sinuous jazz seduction, delicately decorated by a choir of trilling gospel backing singers. CCR tear it up as garage rock, Fogerty baying like a lubricious hyena while the group fill in the "*wha-doo-day*" refrains with cheerful crudity.

FOR all the upful cowpunk knockabout of much of *Green River*, its centrepiece – and, at near five minutes, its longest song by some margin – is the stately Band-esque ballad "Wrote A Song For Everyone". It's a protest song, but a remarkably self-aware one – and very much not the all-join-hands psalm suggested by the title. The verses are gestures of outreach to the downtrodden and disregarded, as is customary in such circumstances, but there's a cruel kicker in the choruses: "*Wrote a song for everyone/But I couldn't even talk to you*". Fogerty later confessed the prosaic truth that this line was his reflection on an argument with his wife, who was wearying of the absences occasioned by the life of a touring musician, but it bears a wider resonance: a bleak suggestion that writing songs with pretensions to relevance is displacement activity at best, self-indulgent folly at worst. As such, "Wrote A Song For Everyone" is, in its way, as bitter a farewell to the 1960s as "Bad Moon Rising", and Fogerty sings it like a man pleading for his life.

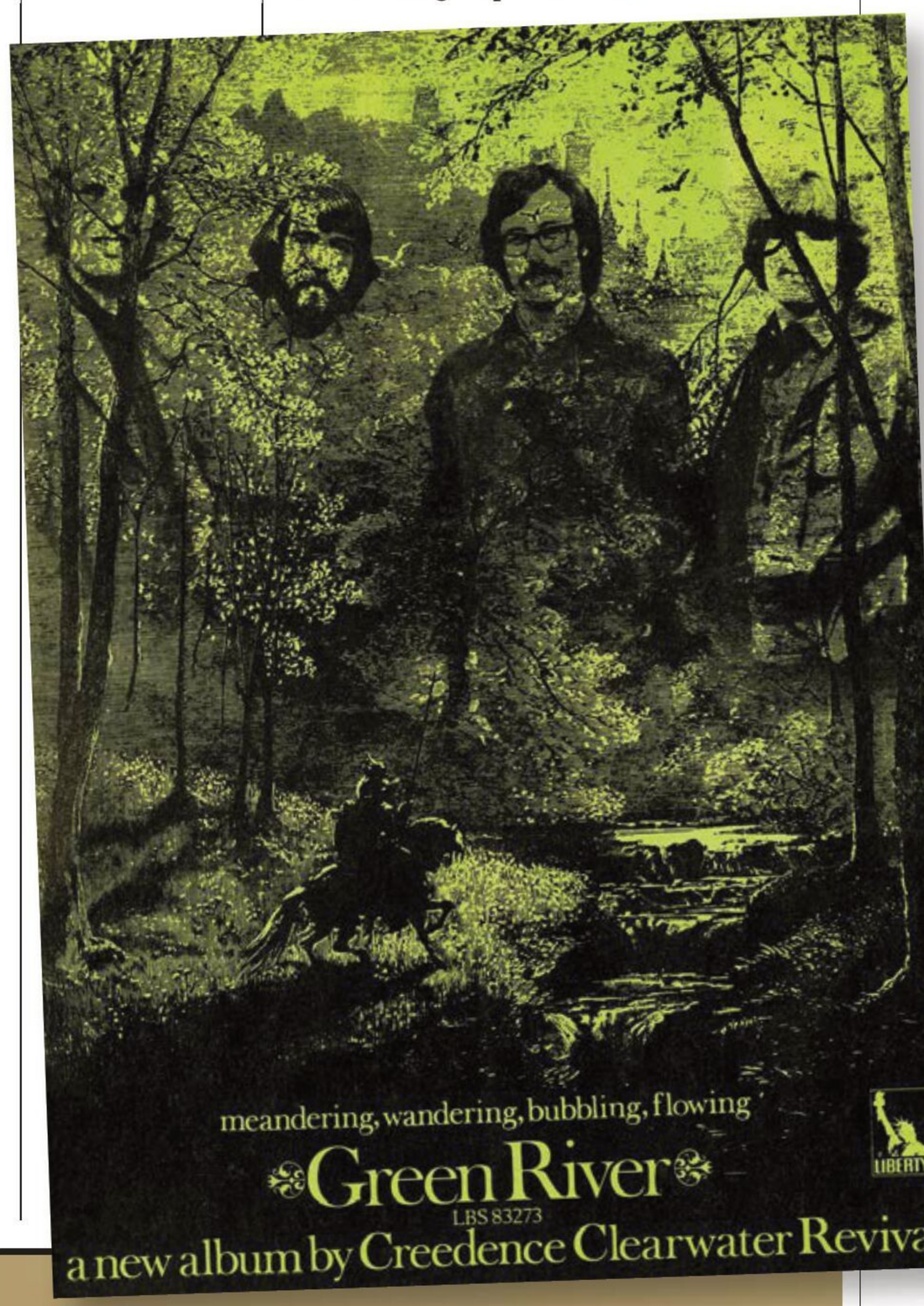
The best song on *Green River*, and arguably the best thing Fogerty ever wrote, is another declaration of disillusion. "Lodi" might, to prospective purchasers, have loomed from the track-listing on the sleeve like a promise of Creedence copping to their Californian origins – the titular town is in San Joaquin county, and was best known, before CCR picked on it, as the hometown of A&W Root Beer. But it is not certain that Fogerty had ever even been to Lodi before he wrote the song – he'd just heard the name, thought it sounded like it might fit into a chorus sometime, and written it down.

A location that breaks into syllables of "low" and "die" is not a subtle choice of backdrop for a tale of a troubadour's existential woes, but "Lodi" is a fabulously unsubtle song. Fogerty channels what has been, at some stage or another, the rueful internal monologue of every musician who has ever slumped in a reeking dressing room after an underwhelming show barely attended by the uninterested denizens of some dust-blown dump and wondered what the heck they were doing with themselves ("*I came into town a one-night stand/Looks like my plans fell through*", and so forth).

The musician's lament is a difficult stunt to stick: such songs are very easy to hear as some spoiled star whining about having to live the wildest dreams of most of their fans, much the more so when sung – as "Lodi" was – by the singer in what might have been, at the time, the most popular band on Earth. But Fogerty later said that he was projecting maybe a decade ahead, imagining himself as a washed-up country singer living resentfully off some half-remembered minor hit – a temptation of fate surely indicative of his complete confidence in CCR at this point.

But "Lodi" was, as well as one of Fogerty's most irresistible melodies, both funny ("*I rode in on the Greyhound/I'll be walking out if I go*") and knowing. The ostensible melancholy of the lyric notwithstanding, Fogerty sings it with a grin a mile wide, gently letting the listener know that, despite everything, his disoriented, disgruntled narrator really has nowhere he'd rather be. That "Lodi" articulated a feeling – and/or perhaps a fear – near universal among Fogerty's fellow artists can be confirmed by the length of the list of others who've taken a crack at it: it includes, but is by no means limited to, Buck Owens, Tom Jones, Bo Diddley, Emmylou Harris, The Flying Burrito Brothers, Shawn Colvin, Tesla, Smokie and Chicory Tip.

Though there isn't a great deal wrong with any of the albums of CCR's first flush, *Green River* was the one on which they best landed their defining trick of sounding at once right-on-deadline relevant and like they were singing songs that might have been written circa the Battle of Chancellorsville. A few decades after its release, John Fogerty told *Uncut* that *Green River* was his favourite CCR album; it is certainly the record that most ruthlessly distilled his group's virtues.



PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

TRACKMARKS GREEN RIVER

1. Green River ★★★★★
2. Commotion ★★★★
3. Tombstone Shadow ★★★★
4. Wrote A Song For Everyone ★★★★★
5. Bad Moon Rising ★★★★★
6. Lodi ★★★★★
7. Cross-Tie Walker ★★★★
8. Sinister Purpose ★★★
9. The Night Time Is The Right Time ★★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studios, SF
Personnel: John Fogerty (lead vocals, lead guitar, piano, keyboards, harmonica), Tom Fogerty (rhythm guitar), Stu Cook (bass), Doug Clifford (drums)
Highest chart position: UK 20; US 1

Released: NOVEMBER 2, 1969

WILLY AND THE POOR BOYS

Vietnam, class war, power, privilege and slavery; anger and gravitas find their place in Fogerty's purple period. *By Michael Hann*

AS creative hot streaks go, Credence's 1969 takes some beating. *Willy And The Poor Boys* was the third album they released that year, all recorded within 12 months from October 1968 and driven by John Fogerty's desire to get his best music out to the people as quickly as possible. While no Creedence album is flawless, that *Willy And The Poor Boys* was so good – and in places it was astounding – was a testament to how music was simply pouring out of Fogerty. Across those three albums, 22 of the songs were Fogerty originals, including most of the songs on which his and Creedence's reputation rests.

Two of those songs were the two sides of *Willy...*'s lead single (the label didn't credit either as A or B): "Down On The Corner" reached No 3 on the Billboard Hot 100, while "Fortunate Son" peaked at No 14. Between them they defined the twin poles of the album. "Down On The Corner" was the very model of Creedence the pop group: a glorious, funky semi-autobiographical story of a four-piece band trying to struggle through (it sounds so much like Booker T And The MG's that it's no surprise one later CD edition included the two bands jamming on a version). At a point in history when rock bands were getting very hard to dance to, "Down On The Corner" was an invitation to get on your feet. It radiated goodwill, and a sense of the band as a closed universe in which mythologies could be created: "*Four kids on the corner, trying to bring you up/Willy picks a tune out, and he blows it on his harp*".

Flip side was the perfect description for "Fortunate Son", because it was musically and lyrically the opposite of "Down On The Corner" and the angriest song Fogerty ever wrote. There was no funk here, nor the good-natured rock'n'roll that was Creedence's default. "Fortunate Son" was furious, seething proto-punk, its guitars fizzing with the same rage as its lyric, far harder than anything Fogerty had recorded even in his garage rock days with The Golliwogs. Its opening was not a million miles from The Beatles' "Back In The USSR", but deeper and more ominous, and it exploded into something much darker. It is timeless musically, but it retains its power because of Fogerty's lyric. "Fortunate Son" was released at the exact point US forces in Vietnam reached their highest number: there were 543,000 US military personnel in the country in November 1969, a number swelled by extensions to the draft in 1967. For the first time the educated and middle class were being flown out to South-East Asia, which made the issue of the draft – previously more of a distasteful abstract than a terrifying reality to the college kids ➤

"Fortunate Son" was furious proto-punk, its guitars fizzing with the same rage as its lyric

FANTASY 8397
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
DUCK KEE MARKET
EER · WINE · FROZEN FOOD · PRODUCE · MEAT
TON 'S
THE POOR BOYS

WILLY AND THE POORBOYS
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
STEREO LBS 83338
Liberty Records

WILLY AND THE POORBOYS
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Produced & Arranged by JOHN FOGERTY
A Product of Debut of California
STEREO
℗ 1970
LBS 83338
Side 1
1. DOWN ON THE CORNER (Fogerty) Burlington 2.43
2. IT CAME OUT OF THE SKY (Fogerty) Burlington 2.58
3. COTTON FIELDS (Ledbetter) Kensington 2.53
4. POOR BOY SHUFFLE (Fogerty) Burlington 2.25
5. FEELIN' BLUE (Fogerty) Burlington 5.05
LIBERTY

and graduates who drove American pop culture – immediately pressing in the cultural consciousness.

The draft had not been an abstract to Fogerty. He had not been to college so had no educational exemption and had received his draft letter in 1966, having previously thought he was ineligible on health grounds. He hurriedly joined the army reserve, and believed the recruiting sergeant backdated his papers to mean he got the dispensations granted to a volunteer rather than a draftee. Whatever the reason, he was able to serve his six months on US soil. Still, he had served, and he observed with disgust the way others managed not to.

With "Fortunate Son", Fogerty didn't issue a heartfelt plea for peace, or bewail the deaths of innocents. There was no sadness in the song, only rage: rage at the class structures that enabled the fortunate sons to avoid war, rage at their ability to shape the world to their own ends. Even without the shadow of Vietnam it would serve as an indictment of the family ties and fraternity bonds that shaped – and continue to shape – the exercise of power in the United States. And because it was not an anti-war song, per se, it escaped its time. Unlike "Fixin' To Die Rag" or other songs that were explicit in their target (or tethered in place by musical fashions), it was not tied to the era of its creation. Its seething class consciousness ("*It ain't me, it ain't me/I ain't no fortunate one*") gave it a universality that continued to resonate down the decades, and its music – unlike not just most of the music of 1969, but most of Creedence's catalogue – means it has not dated in the way, say, "Suzie Q" has. "Fortunate Son" does not sound like 1969; it sounds like the America of forever.

As well as "Fortunate Son", *Willy And The Poor Boys* contained Fogerty's second angriest song, the album's closer, "Effigy", inspired by President Richard Nixon. In his autobiography *Fortunate Son*, Fogerty talks of an event he recalls as being in November 1969 – which doesn't work in terms of chronology, but ties in with the song's lyric of "*a fire burnin' on the palace lawn*" – in which he recalls a quarter of a million protesters converging on the White House. "Nixon came out and told them, 'Nothing you do here today will have any effect on me' – he was going to go back inside and watch the football game on TV," Fogerty writes. "It was like, 'Your people have come to talk to you, King Louis XVI. They're upset.' And he's telling them he doesn't care, he's going back in the palace to do what royalty does." In fact, that recollection is probably wrong. It seems more likely that the event Fogerty remembered was Nixon's impromptu visit to protesters at the Lincoln Memorial in May 1970, when he surprised students from Syracuse by wanting to talk to them about the university's football team.

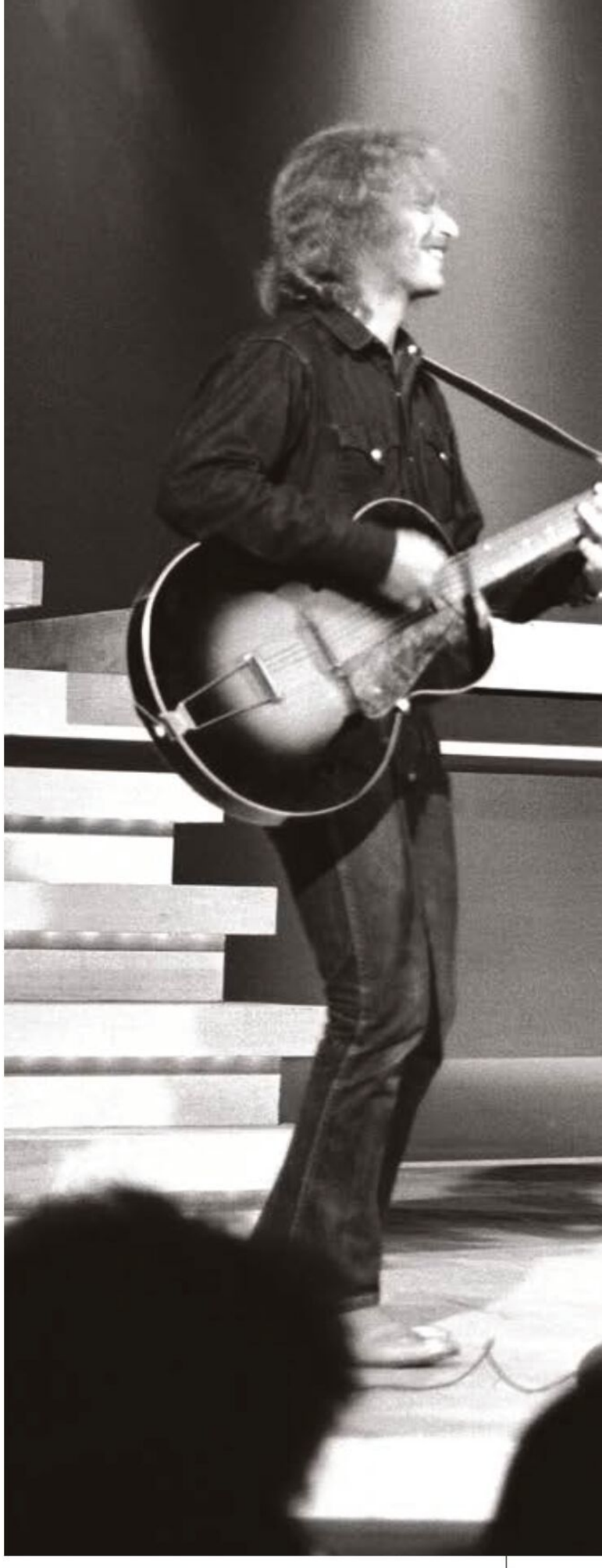
Whatever its genesis, "Effigy" was a fitting ending for the record. "Fortunate Son" alone would not have been enough to buy the album seriousness; it would have been overbalanced by the frivolity of the pair of instrumentals ("Poorboy Shuffle", "Side O' The Road"), the novelty sci-fi number ("It Came Out Of The Sky") and the nostalgia for a past unlived ("Cotton Fields", "Midnight Special"). But "Effigy" gave *Willy And The Poor Boys* a quality Creedence rarely possessed: gravitas. Its almost baroque opening gives way to a stately, circular riff that repeats, unresolved, for more than six minutes, with Fogerty narrating what is almost a dark fairy tale, of fire spreading to the palace, to the countryside: "*Who is burning? Who is burning? Effigy*".

But the politics also counterbalanced another, less fortunate side of Creedence. There is no doubting Fogerty's deep and sincere love of black American music: in that autobiography he notes that he had sometimes wondered why a boy from suburban California sang with a Southern accent, until he realised all the singers he adored the most were from the South. Creedence also had a notable history of taking R&B acts out on tour with them. Nor could one accuse him of slavishly appropriating black styles and repurposing them for mass consumption, in the way of Pat Boone rerecording "Tutti Frutti". No matter whether they were playing soul or R&B or rock'n'roll, everything Creedence did came out sounding like Creedence. Sometimes, though, that appreciation for African-American culture veered over into something approaching what we would now call cosplay.

THE cover of *Willy And The Poor Boys* alone – certainly at this distance in time – is enough to raise an eye. Here is the band, in jugband set-up, outside the Duck Kee Market on a pretty desolate street in Oakland, being watched by a handful of black kids. They may have been an Oakland band – not like the college kids across the bay in Haight-Ashbury – but by this point Creedence were in the midst of their stretch as America's greatest singles band; Fogerty himself was earning so much he literally didn't know what to do with his money. Posing as the poor boys – the actual *...Poor Boys* – certainly wasn't meant as an act of condescension, but it certainly looks like one now.

Ditto "Cotton Fields", the Lead Belly song The Beach Boys had also covered in 1969. Goodness only knows what drew two separate white Californian groups to sing a song of strange nostalgia for the cotton fields (written by a man whose own experiences had been repackaged and repurposed by John and Alan Lomax for white audiences). It sounds fearfully misjudged now, even if it was also testimony to Fogerty's skill in the studio. Unhappy with Doug Clifford's drumming, he oversaw a process of "maybe 30 or 40 edits" to the tape to splice the drumbeats where he wanted them, then overdubbed acoustic guitar to smooth over the joins. Proof that Creedence was already a band of tensions came from what Fogerty did next: "When we were all done, there was a pile of all those pieces of tape we'd cut out lying on the floor. So I went and got an envelope. Because I was pissed. I put all those pieces of tape – a lot of pieces of tape – in the envelope, drove to Doug's house, and said, 'Here's your drum track.'"

"Fortunate Son", however, redeemed the missteps. The purity of its anger and its empathy for those born outside privilege allows the sincerity of Fogerty's relationship with black music to be evident. Class was the prism through which Fogerty saw America, the result of an upbringing not of dire poverty, but of one in which insecurity was constant. He likely wasn't concerning himself with



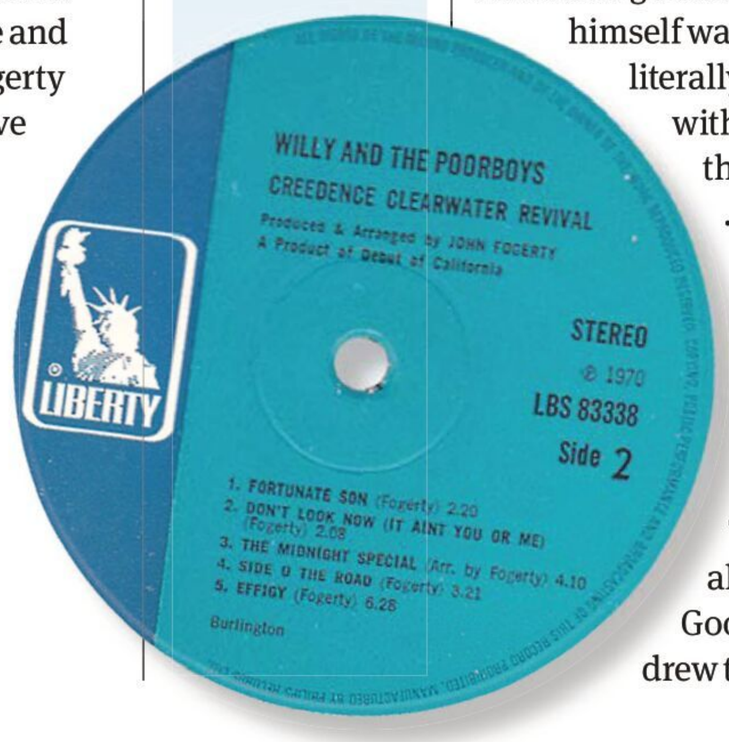
CRITICS' VERDICT

"Fed up with Swamp Rock as a description of Creedence's music? Then how about Bluesabilly. Their music here cross-breeds rock'n'roll with blues and country and the child is healthy and thriving."

BD, MELODY MAKER, 14/3/1970

"'It Came Out Of The Sky' is unadulterated rock'n'roll with the sound of the '50s stamped all over it – John Fogerty's lead guitar, a rolling piano and Doug Clifford's crashing drums never let up and the whole thing is irresistible... The wailing harmonica on 'Poorboy Shuffle' makes the track sound like a hillbilly hop; it's very good and quite amusing."

RICHARD GREEN, NME, 14/3/1970



PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Poor Boys in Hollywood: CCR perfoming "Down On The Corner" on ABC TV series *The Music Scene*, December 1969

structural racism, but he certainly recognised inequality, and that was something that could unite black and white people.

Creedence were a complicated band, and Fogerty a complicated man. In November 1969, as *Willy And The Poor Boys* was released, he cajoled the rest of the band into joining him in donating food and supplies to a group of Native Americans who had occupied Alcatraz Island in protest against the treatment of their people. Yet he also decried the self-absorption of the hippie movement. He didn't believe in anyone's right to opt out of society, something he explained in his autobiography when recounting his response to someone who expressed his desire to stop paying taxes and live off the land: "Well, you're living off somebody's land."

So even while *Willy And The Poor Boys* took aim at the privilege of power, it also targeted those with the privilege to protest, knowing that – to quote a later enemy of class tourism – "*if you called your dad he could stop it all*". "Don't Look Now (It Ain't You Or Me)" was a jaunty strum, but it was also a warning to those who assumed that everyone with long hair must be on the same side, a note that you could be as right-on as you like, but your class would always define your place in society. In an era when rich kids were prone to celebrating the virtues of poverty and communal living, its chorus was quietly devastating: "*Don't look now, someone's done your starving*". Jarvis Cocker might have had more wit, but he and Fogerty shared their rage. (It's telling, perhaps, that when Fogerty told *NME* in 1970 of Creedence being a move back to musical basics, he compared them not to The Band, but to Glen Campbell. He was an everyman, not a hipster.)

Willy And The Poor Boys is like every Creedence album: imperfect. But it's also the record on which John Fogerty gave the most concentrated version of himself. Perhaps that was uncomfortable, and perhaps that's why it wasn't quite as big a US hit as the albums that fell either side of it, *Green River* and *Cosmo's Factory*, where the anger was less directed and more metaphorical. So steady were Creedence – each album up to *Pendulum* contained at least one song you could make a convincing case for being their best – that it's the work of a fool to claim any particular record as the standout. But *Willy And The Poor Boys* was unique; it was the point where Fogerty's vision became complicated, and it's all the richer for that.

Willy... is the record on which Fogerty gave the most concentrated version of himself

TRACKMARKS WILLY AND THE POOR BOYS

1. Down On The Corner ★★★★★
2. It Came Out Of The Sky ★★★★
3. Cotton Fields ★★★
4. Poorboy Shuffle ★★
5. Feelin' Blue ★★★
6. Fortunate Son ★★★★★
7. Don't Look Now (It Ain't You Or Me) ★★★
8. The Midnight Special ★★★
9. Side O' The Road ★★
10. Effigy ★★★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studios, SF
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, lead guitar, piano, maracas, cowbell, harmonica), Tom Fogerty (rhythm guitar, backing vocals), Stu Cook (bass, washtub bass, backing vocals), Doug Clifford (drums, washboard)
Highest chart position: UK 10; US 3

“ROCK’N’ ROLL IS A DANGEROUS WAY OF LIFE”

A trip around northern European discos with *NME* in the company of “Mr Whiskers”, “Captain America” and “Willie The Pimp”. Oh, and the now internationally famous and very together Creedence Clearwater Revival. Both crowds and aftershows are wild, as the band enjoy the perks of becoming a worldwide phenomenon with its own blue-collar Beatlemania scenes. “I’ve just bought a suit of armour!” *John Fogerty* tells *Roy Carr*

"The Royal Albert Hall was the ultimate": (l–r) John Fogerty, Tom Fogerty, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford rock the RAH during a brief European tour, April, 15, 1970

MIKERANDOLPH/PAUL POPPER/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Fresh in from 'Frisco: CCR at Heathrow Airport, London, April 7, 1970

NME 11/4/1970

"LIVE ALBUMS ARE A SHUCK – A CHEAP WAY OF TURNING OVER MONEY"

John Fogerty

"IN the States, they tell us Creedence Clearwater Revival are the stopgap between The Beatles and the 'next Beatles – whoever the next Beatles may be'," John Fogerty confided in me minutes after landing at Heathrow Airport, direct from San Francisco.

"We are now experiencing what The Beatles have gone through a thousand-fold. After enjoying a fantastic run of increasing popularity in America, our records are starting to break really big in all the important markets throughout the world.

"Of course, we can never, ever hope to emulate the impact made by The Beatles. Nobody can," said John, as he gazed at the huge pile of the group's instruments and cases being wheeled in for customs inspection.

"The major reason why we have come over here is to see the people and let the people see us, because they seem to like our music. I know that this is a quick trip and I don't want people in other cities to think that we are shunning them. If things go as well as expected, then I can assure you that we will return later to do a lengthy concert tour."

After quickly and uneventfully passing through customs, John enlarged on this point.

"I could have come to this country on a private visit, but this would have served little purpose, because I wouldn't have been able to gauge a positive reaction to Creedence. So I decided that after your bad weather we would all come to Britain for a couple of concerts and see what the scene was."

When meeting any incoming American personalities for the very first time you move with trepidation when trying to gain their confidence. Thankfully I was immediately put at ease by John and the rest of the Revival, whose natural friendliness and good humour is very evident.

"The reason why Creedence Clearwater Revival has stayed together for 11 years is simply because we have had no reason to disband," says John.

"We are far too busy trying to make good music to even think about spitting. Naturally, we sometimes have our minor differences of opinion, but that's only to be expected. It's taken us a very long time to finally make good, but all the time I was confident that we as group had something worthwhile to offer. And now we've proved our point. But I can tell you that during this time there were many people that tried to put us down.

"I have noticed that in England we are known as a Bayou band. They call our music swamp rock or something. I don't think that we are. In my opinion, Creedence embraces all the many influences that have evolved through pop music. Sometimes it's a fusion, sometimes it's a corruption of what has happened. It's hard to spot our own evolution; all I know is that I hold all the great rock and blues stars – Howlin' Wolf, Carl Perkins, Little Richard and Buddy Holly – in great esteem. I owe all my early influences to these and many other great artists.

"Now when I came to write our current single 'Travellin' Band' I decided to try and do an original song in the true traditional style of all those great rock standards, for I suddenly realised that there hadn't been a new one in years. 'Hi-Heel Sneakers' was about the last one.

"On '...Band' I pay homage to Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Elvis before he joined RCA, and lots more. If you listen closely there are bits of 'Too Much Monkey Business,' 'Good Golly Miss Molly', 'Jailhouse Rock' and even 'Rock Around The Clock' jumping around in it. With this particular song I was trying to follow in an idiom that has stopped. I think that the record turned out quite well.

"Our next single is 'Run Through The Jungle' and 'Up Around The Bend'. People have been on to me to put out a 'live' album by the group, but so

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Swamp rock emissaries: CCR outside the US Embassy on Grosvenor Square, London, April 17, 1970

far I have refused. To me most live albums are a shuck... a cheap way or turning over a lot of money. Of all the many concert albums available there have only been three that have been worthwhile, one of which was by Ray Charles.

"I don't like this idea of sell-sell-sell. Most of these albums are just badly recorded versions of available records usually put out by the companies to cash in on a recent successful whirlwind tour.

"I'm not afraid of people hearing us live, it's just that if I ever considered doing such an album it would have to be made up of fresh material or newer arrangements of some of our standard numbers.

"I have started on the music for our next album. As yet there aren't any titles but I am considering including a very old song originally done by Roy Orbison before he became famous.

"Putting out a single is like having a baby four or five times a year. And an album is like having quads. Actually, I usually work in cycles. As soon as one record is out I start working on ideas for the next one; sometimes I dry up and I can't seem to get any inspiration. I'll try hard, and nothing comes in fact if I try too hard. But I'm sure that I'll be getting fresh ideas from the change of environment of playing in Europe for the first time."

NME 18/4/1970

UNTIL you have actually been caught up in the middle of uncontrolled fan fever, you can't really imagine what a frightening experience it can be.

Well, Creedence Clearwater Revival met it in full force in Essen when I accompanied them on the first leg of their European concert tour.

After making a most nerve-shattering car dash from Düsseldorf, which made the chase sequence from *Bullitt* seem like slow-motion, we arrived somewhat shaken at the mammoth Grugahalle.

Immediately, the car was surrounded by hordes of excited fans who began to rock the car in a most violent manner. At this our lunatic of a driver completely panicked and fled for his life, leaving us all stranded. Despite the seriousness of our situation John Fogerty seemed quite amused at it all.

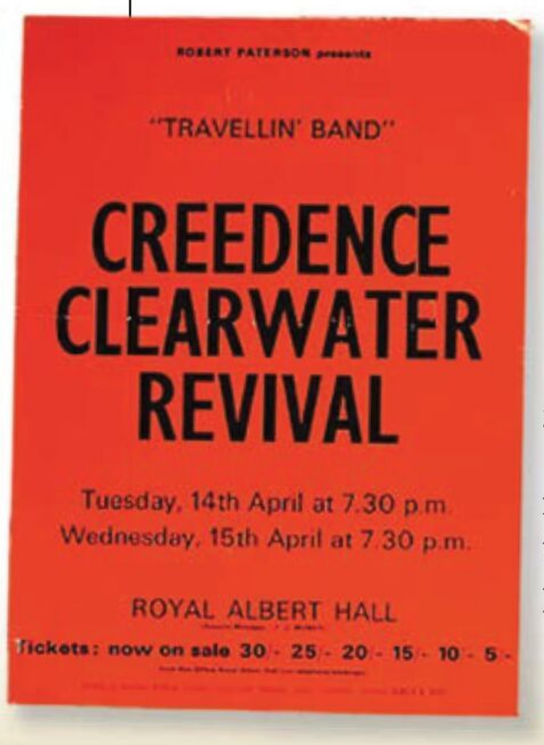
Well there was only one thing left to do before the crowd succeeded in demolishing the limousine, and that was to make a run for it.

Road manager Bruce Young miraculously got everyone out of the car and we ran the 25-yard gauntlet to the stage door. To our horror we found that it was blocked by a giant of a bouncer who apparently couldn't distinguish Creedence from the fans.

So with one almighty heave Tom and Stu lifted him bodily out of the way and we crashed through the doorway, narrowly escaping being torn to shreds.

Once inside the hall we suddenly came face to face with a scene which was almost a throw-back to the Germany of the '40s... a whole battalion of fierce-looking riot police in typical Teutonic trappings of green leather maxi coats, high-peaked hats, side-arms, helmets, and atrocious alsatian guard dogs that gave an atmosphere of impending violence to the proceedings.

Indeed, for no apparent reason other than that he couldn't produce his press card, a famous German photographer was brutally man-handled from backstage despite the efforts of Creedence's most amiable PR man, Jake.



After much whistling and handclapping from a restless audience the concert finally got underway with one-man band Wilbert Harrison who won the audience over with a good set.

During the interval masses of 'bouncers' took up strategic positions as sections of the audience moved forward en masse to stand right in front of the stage.

After a lengthy announcement, Creedence ran on stage and proceeded to rock through all their familiar hits – "Born On The Bayou", "Green River", "Travellin' Band", "Proud Mary". This produced much raving and wild outbursts of idiot dancing from the audience.

This was the excuse for the bouncers to "do their thing". And I saw a few heads get well and truly cracked for no reason whatsoever. It seems that in Germany a pop concert becomes a confrontation between the audience, who object to paying for seats, and the police, with the group acting as background music. Fortunately, Creedence's music is very happy and non-violent and therefore a full-scale riot was diverted.

ESSEN was the second night of the concert tour. The whole ball started rolling two days earlier when we all flew out from Heathrow Airport. Now an aeroplane journey can prove an uneventful bore, but luckily we were distracted by a most attractive young lady called Jean, whose luggage seemed to be entirely made up of boxes of Rice Krispies.

After arriving at Rotterdam we gave her a lift to the station and proceeded to the Hilton Hotel for a press conference.

Rotterdam isn't exactly the Mecca of European nightlife, but after the conference we all decided to drum up some action. And we found it in the Le Bateau discotheque which was situated underneath the hotel.

Before long we had a really wild party in full swing with everyone looning about the place. We were soon to be joined by a whole crowd of friendly locals which included two very attractive blondes called Yolande and Anya.

As the evening's jollity progressed, what seemed like an endless stream of lager and Bacardi kept on arriving at our table followed by a weirdo of a club manager called Martin who then proceeded to consume most of it and then tell us how much he was enjoying himself.

His only topic of rather slurred conversation was a young lady whom he kept on yelling "glowed in the dark". "Willie The Pimp" as he was soon to be known, kept on trying to introduce us to this professional female friend of his, but to no avail.

Around 4.30am we all trickled out into the cold night air and wandered into the hotel, crashing out in our respective rooms.

As the town hall clock struck noon, it was followed by what seemed like the clanging of thousands of bells all over the city. After making sure that it wasn't heralding Armageddon there was much drinking of Alka-Seltzers and other relief-giving liquids.

It was only after we had assembled in the coffee shop that Stu realised that Willie had lumbered him with a bill for over one hundred dollars. It was agreed that we would have to revisit him after the two concerts that evening.

"Commander" Jay Vickers, who was the British tour manager, informed us that we were completely free until rehearsal call at five in the afternoon. Everyone decided to do a little sightseeing and shopping, so Stu and I armed ourselves with umbrellas and wandered around the rather interesting new shopping complex.

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

CCR in Europe, 1970: negotiating champagne breakfasts, bothersome hangers-on and crazed Jagger impersonators

The Doclen Hall is a very impressive building similar in architecture to our own Royal Festival Hall, and a very good venue to open a tour.

The Dutch have a reputation for being rather quiet and reserved, but during the second concert they proved quite the reverse. It will be a very long time before they forget about the visit of Creedence Clearwater Revival. If the first concert was good, the second was sensational. The band really hit its stride, with Doug thrashing his drums in wild abandon as John, Tom and Stu raved around the stage.

As John proceeded to play the familiar intros of all their numbers he was greeted with roars of approval and showers of tulips and carnations. By the time they were into "Travellin' Band" both the aisles and the front of the stage were just one solid mass of gyrating bodies.

"Keep On Chooglin'" was the clincher – the whole auditorium erupted with dozens of fans leaping onto the stage and dancing. Equipment men Ray and Koutzy kept an eye on all the wiring, whilst audio engineer Bruce Burns, clad in his "Captain America" shirt, gazed on in utter bewilderment.

By the end of the set the whole stage was full of people and it became almost impossible to get them to leave. They started stamping their feet and chanting. Indeed this went on for around a quarter-of-an-hour.

After the show it was decided that some of us would revisit Willie, and the rest would go on to a couple of informal parties being held back at the hotel. After yet another bout of looning Willie was plied with enough drinks to open a brewery.

He was last seen on all fours crawling around the dancefloor mumbling about how happy he was and calling for his girl-friend who glowed in the dark. Back at the hotel there was much merry-making, which carried on until dawn.

Around mid-afternoon we left in a fleet of cars for our drive to Amsterdam, where we would catch our flight for Düsseldorf and Essen. Before we left we were pleased to hear that Willie was indisposed.

On arrival at Düsseldorf airport we were most alarmed to see police carrying sub-machine guns. We were informed it was in case fans came to wreck the airport! After checking into the hotel, there was another press conference followed by our incredible journey to Essen.

After the evening concert there was yet another press conference followed by an excellent dinner party back at the hotel. Later on, Doug, Stu, Jake and myself sat around talking until we realised it was six in the morning, and we all split.

Two hours later, some joker rang everyone and we all got up and started to get washed and dressed. It wasn't until we started staggering down the hall that we realised what time it was and fell back into bed.

When we finally did rise a few hours later we found Tom and Wilbert Harrison enjoying a champagne breakfast and listening to a Moog album. We all settled for strong coffee.

But more about that next week, for we shall be visiting Stockholm, Copenhagen, Paris and Berlin.

"THIS WHOLE TRIP IS REALLY GOING TO GIVE ME SOME GREAT IDEAS FOR NEW SONGS"

John Fogerty

NME 25/4/1970

"HEY, rock'n'roll is a dangerous way of life," the ever-smiling Tom Fogerty joked as our jet violently accelerated and turned to try and make a second attempt to land at Copenhagen Airport. Owing to extremely bad visibility, our pilot had to gain height very rapidly and commence another run-in.

"With all this travelling, I suppose there is a certain amount of risk," Tom continued, and then in an attempt to cheer us all up Doug Clifford offered, "But don't forget that most rock artists were wiped out in car wrecks or small private aircraft. It is far safer in a jet than in a car," he said as the plane lurched.

Finally, to a round of applause and shouts of more, our pilot put us down safely on the runway of Scandinavia's wildest city after two days in Stockholm – and what a weird 48 hours they proved to be.

Though Scandinavia has this image of complete personal freedom as far as staying in hotels and, would you believe, visiting discotheques is concerned, long hair and denim trousers are still looked upon with distaste. The Foresta Hotel in Stockholm is a modernistic complex built into the side of a cliff overlooking the Baltic Sea.

"This place must have been designed by a drunken mole," said Tom, after getting lost in the labyrinth of corridors.

Our first night on the town was spent with EMI'S local representative Haken at the Discotheque Alexandre. Creedence then decided to throw a party, but the night manager (Mr Whitey) would

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

not allow our party of nocturnal revellers into the hotel. After the show the next evening it was decided that we were going to throw a really big bash at the hotel apartments, so under the direction of tour manager Jay Vickers (who is known as Mr Whiskers) Operation Choog Lin was conceived.

How Whiskers did it we'll never know, but he managed to obtain a full set of keys to the hotel, and a large fridge full of lager! Prior to the party we got things livened up visiting the Napoleon discotheque.

"We've got nothing like this in the States," Tom Fogerty yelled above the music as he took over as DJ. It's just like listening to a groovy radio station without the commercials!"

After a couple of telephone calls our convoy of cars glided silently to the side of the Foresta hotel and at a pre-arranged time the doors were thrown open and Doug Clifford cartwheeled into the place.

From then on until dawn the party was in full swing, "This whole trip is really going to give me some great ideas for new songs," Creedence's prolific hit writer John Fogerty confided to me over a drink of tequila. "Don't be surprised to see a song dedicated to Mr Whiskers on some future album."

The bilingual Mr Whiskers has the unenviable job of not only getting the entire Creedence package from country to country without any hang-ups but the remainder of the bill too. Indeed his exploits over the last week have made him almost legendary. It has been said that you can cram a lifetime's living into 48 hours in Copenhagen, and that's exactly what we did.

This is where we bumped into some really strange scenes. One club refused us admission because of denims, yet while they were refusing us, Creedence's current hit "Travellin' Band" was blasting out over the sound system and the foyer was decorated with their latest album covers! At another place which was some kind of key club, the doorman was on an ego trip because he proudly boasted that he had refused admission to Led Zeppelin.

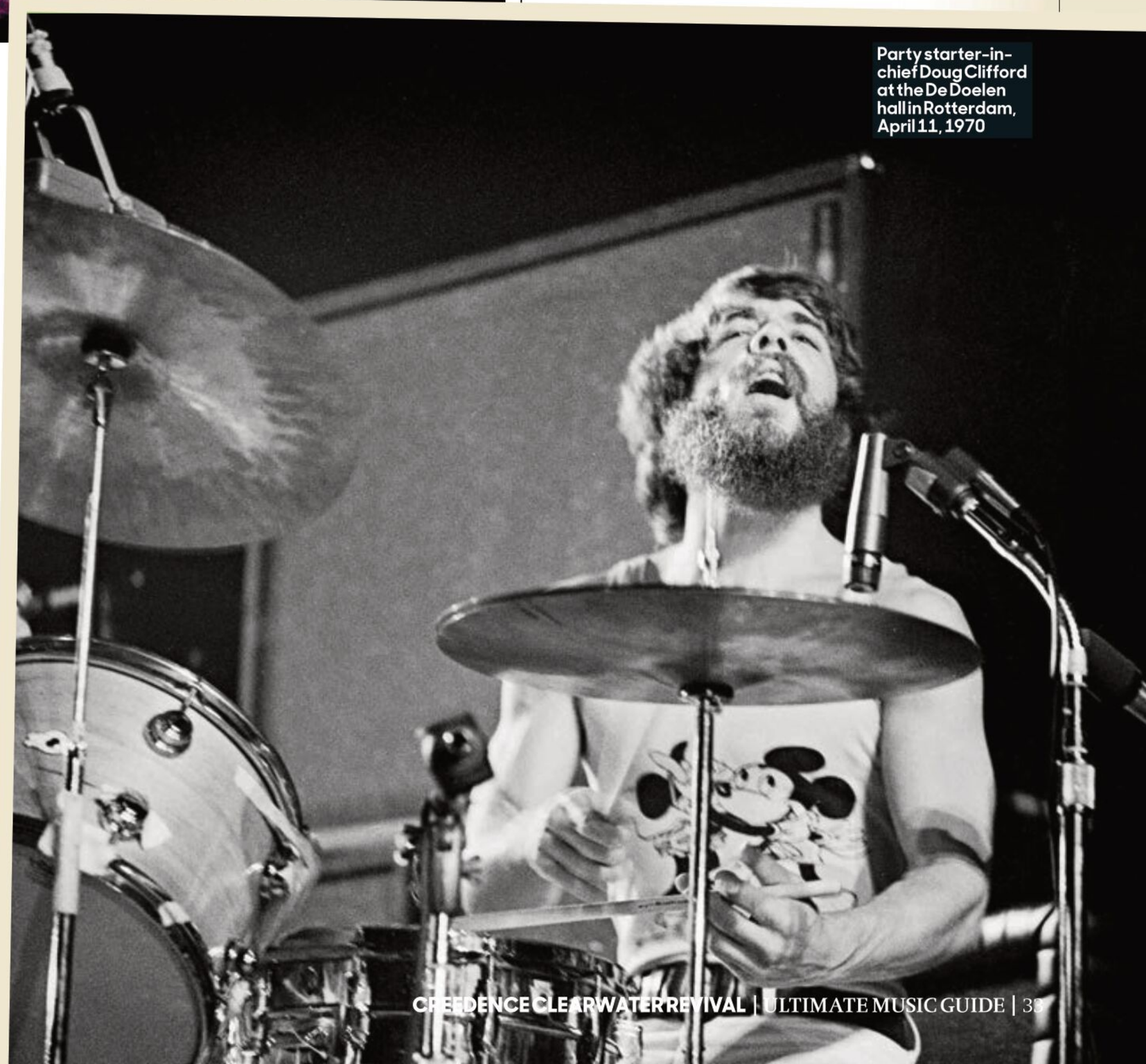
Finally we stopped in a nice place called the Disc Club where we met some really interesting people, including a most beautiful actress from London called Heddy. While we were content to stay in the club, Mr Whiskers and Bruce Burns, also known as Captain America, visited the Club Den Gronne, where apparently the most amazing things were going on.

Needless to say they were reported missing in action for the next 24 hours.

In fact, they closed the club and brought the entire floor show back to the Palace Hotel for an encore. Just before dawn was breaking, Mr Whiskers was last seen sharing a bottle of Scotch with film actor Trevor Howard.

The camera crew who are filming this entire tour were last seen taking shots of the moon and Tom, John, Doug and Stu were leaping about in various clubs around the city. Then a telephone call came through from the East German border guards asking why the trucks with all the equipment hadn't yet arrived at the border. ➤

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS



Party starter-in-chief Doug Clifford at the De Doelen hall in Rotterdam, April 11, 1970

Someone vaguely remembered that the crew had last been seen in the company of about eight attractive Danish blondes in a nightclub.

You can buy all kinds of offbeat souvenirs in Copenhagen, but John Fogerty topped the lot. "I have just bought a full suit of armour. It's really fabulous and cost me 50 thousand crowns," he gleefully declared, as the rest of us stumbled off into the rain for our flight to West Berlin.

"It should be fantastic scene in Paris," Tom continued, "because both Doug and Stu are celebrating their birthdays there, and we are going to give them a most fantastic birthday party." Tell you about it next week, and also about West Berlin.

NME 2/5/1970

New Musical Express

Simon and Garfunkel's amazing reaction to London concert

RAY STEVENS'

AUDIENCE HYSTERIA DISMAYED THEM

Magic weavers of contentment

"IT'S just like going back in time to those dark days of World War Two," Doug Clifford sadly bemoaned, as we drove past armed guards at the notorious Checkpoint Charlie, for clearance by the Russian authorities to journey into Communist-controlled East Berlin.

All our half-hearted jokes about being spies or being kidnapped suddenly came to a very abrupt halt when a stern-faced female frontier official stepped onto our coach. "My luck's in," someone shouted, as she started a silent passport check. Meanwhile a guard was making a detailed inspection of the luggage boot and underside of our vehicle.

As she gave John Fogerty a visual once-over, Doug continued: "It may be the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birthday today, but all these flags, slogans and military processions can't disguise the overall drabness of everything."

"Well, they're all satisfied that we're lean, clean and bluesy!" Tom Fogerty joked, as the Russians allowed us to continue our sightseeing expedition through the Eastern sector.

As we slowly passed Hitler's Bunker and the impressive Brandenburg Gate, Doug observed, "Everything here in Germany is so military-orientated. That goes for both the East and the West. There is such an aggressive feeling towards the way of life over here. They don't seem to have any kind of humour. The only emotions are fear, suspicion and violence. There's no half-measure. What an awful way to live!"

Apart from this ludicrous show of military strength, Berlin projects an image of being a depraved city. All West Berlin's bright lights, increasing affluence and well-stocked shops just can't hide the moral sickness which is rapidly eating itself into their society.

Our first and last night out on the (West) town proved to be a near disaster. In every city that Creedence visited they were usually accompanied by a very aware representative from the local record company or left to explore the nightspots on their own. In Berlin we were surrounded and almost suffocated, by a dozen or more freeloaders, hangers-on and male groupies.

On entering the first club, Tom told the rest of the group, "We are just being paraded for the benefit of those guys. They are trying to use us to get chicks. Let's split." So off we went to the Eden-Playboy, closely pursued by this unwanted horde.

All thoughts of privacy and relaxation were shattered when the Eden Playboy DJ proceeded to play an endless stream of Creedence's records. Finally, our diplomatic tour manager Jay "Mr Whiskers" Vickers, put his foot down and after a few words our uninvited guests left. The focal point of the club was a small swimming pool into which the men were invited to dive fully clothed for a bottle of champagne and girls were offered cash prizes for going topless.

As expected the challenge was accepted by a couple of locals. Apparently, at weekends the club is full of jaded soaking-wet men and half-naked teenyboppers.

Still in search of a club in which to have a quiet drink, we ended up at Pimm's – and what a sick scene that turned out to be. Evidently the boys were really girls and the attractive, bosomy blondes at the bar were boys. Quite a number of the customers who were dancing couldn't decide what they were.

Throughout these bizarre proceedings a middle-aged drag queen, who looked like Old Mother Riley, was roaming around distributing roses. After beating off the advances of the manager, we made it back to our Berlin hotel, which didn't prove to be much better.

"The organisation is totally nonexistent," Stu Cook informed a rather offhand desk clerk. "We've had no real privacy since we checked in. We have been continually harassed." This was a fact. For I myself was awakened one night to find two strange youths in my room. And Tom Fogerty was bothered by photographers in the early hours of the morning.

Stu Cook retreats from sleazy propositions and heavy-handed bouncers at the Amsterdam Hilton, April 1970

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THE final crunch came when we returned to the hotel on our last evening to find that some local groupies had managed to get our room keys from the reception and were waiting in ambush by the elevator. One of them seemed to have what appeared to be a knitted head, while another kept on mumbling about Barry Ryan. Needless to say they were ejected!

As if this wasn't enough, someone kept on slipping the most extraordinary colour Polaroid photographs under our doors, depicting some very "wild happenings" that were taking place in a room on the third floor.

"The only good thing about Berlin was the concert," John Fogerty said, as he mopped his brow in the cramped dressing room of the Sportspalast. "They were a really good audience and reminded me a lot of the Fillmore West."

Thankfully, they were well behaved and there was no need for the stormtrooper riot police, who had armed themselves with an assortment of ugly weapons and crash helmets, to go into action.

Without any remorse, we left Berlin for the final leg of the tour – Paris – where we would all be celebrating the joint birthdays of both Doug and Stu.

"Throughout this entire tour Mr Whiskers has never failed to amaze me with his exploits," John proceeded to tell me, as film-man John Palmer shot yards of footage for a forthcoming Creedence movie. "None of us knew that Jay was a fully qualified pilot until Flight Captain Curien invited him to sit at the controls for part of the journey from Berlin to Orly. It's just too much!" (For the record, his licence number is S6962.)

By the time we had settled into the Hotel Prince De Galles, everyone was either suffering from "battle" fatigue or a touch of the Continental tummy. And except for Tom, they all retreated to their rooms. "I want to see as much of Paris as humanly possible," Tom yelled as we dived into a cab and headed for a bar in Place Pigalle.

"A GUY COULD HAPPILY LOSE HIMSELF AMONG ALL THIS RICH ATMOSPHERE"

Tom Fogerty

We had no sooner ordered a couple of beers when a most attractive and well blessed young lady enquired if we were interested in "*l'amour*". Gracefully, we declined her services and moved on to very old bistro high up in Montmartre.

"This whole trip has really opened my mind," Tom informed me as a couple of slightly out-of-tune guitarists entertained the customers. "A guy could come over here and happily lose himself among all this rich atmosphere. It's so unbelievable, and so sane."

Around 1am we made it down to the Left Bank and into the Open One Club, where we bumped into guitarist Johnny Winter, his twin brother Edgar, and a crazy little photographer called Renee. Together we split for the Rock & Roll Circus, which was to become our nightly scene for the three days we were there.

After being wined and dined by DJ and host Cameron Watson, both Tom and Johnny got up onto the small stage and jammed on some very earthy blues numbers!

Later on, as we got stuck into a jug of red wine, a young guy dressed in black came on and started to mime to various Rolling Stones records. You would see in his eyes that he was really living the part – in his mind he was Jagger.

Suddenly he went berserk, smashing plates, demolishing tables, throwing water and causing general havoc. Turning to me, Tom shouted, "He's mad; the man is out of his head," as Johnny Winter just sat and laughed hysterically.

Except for Tom, we all drove out to the Palace Of Versailles the next afternoon. "So this where King Louis the whatsit used to have his wild scenes," John remarked as we passed through the famous hall of mirrors.

"It's just like a big film set," Stu chuckled, as both he and Cosmo (Doug) photographed everything in sight. Later in the afternoon we drove back to Paris to visit the Louvre and see the *Mona Lisa* and the *Venus De Milo*.

Throughout the tour, the fabulous offbeat humour of Creedence's record boss Saul Zaentz acted as a great soothing influence on everyone. It was much appreciated on the evening of Doug and Stu's birthday party... Stu is older by one day!

On the way to the party, John confided, "We have achieved exactly what we set out to do on this tour. It's proved a rewarding success and a total experience for each and every one of us. Though all the concerts were great, the Royal Albert Hall was the ultimate."

When we finally arrived at Castelle's, we were informed that we would have to wait as our tables weren't ready. So it was all down into the basement discotheque to be paraded and gawked at once again.

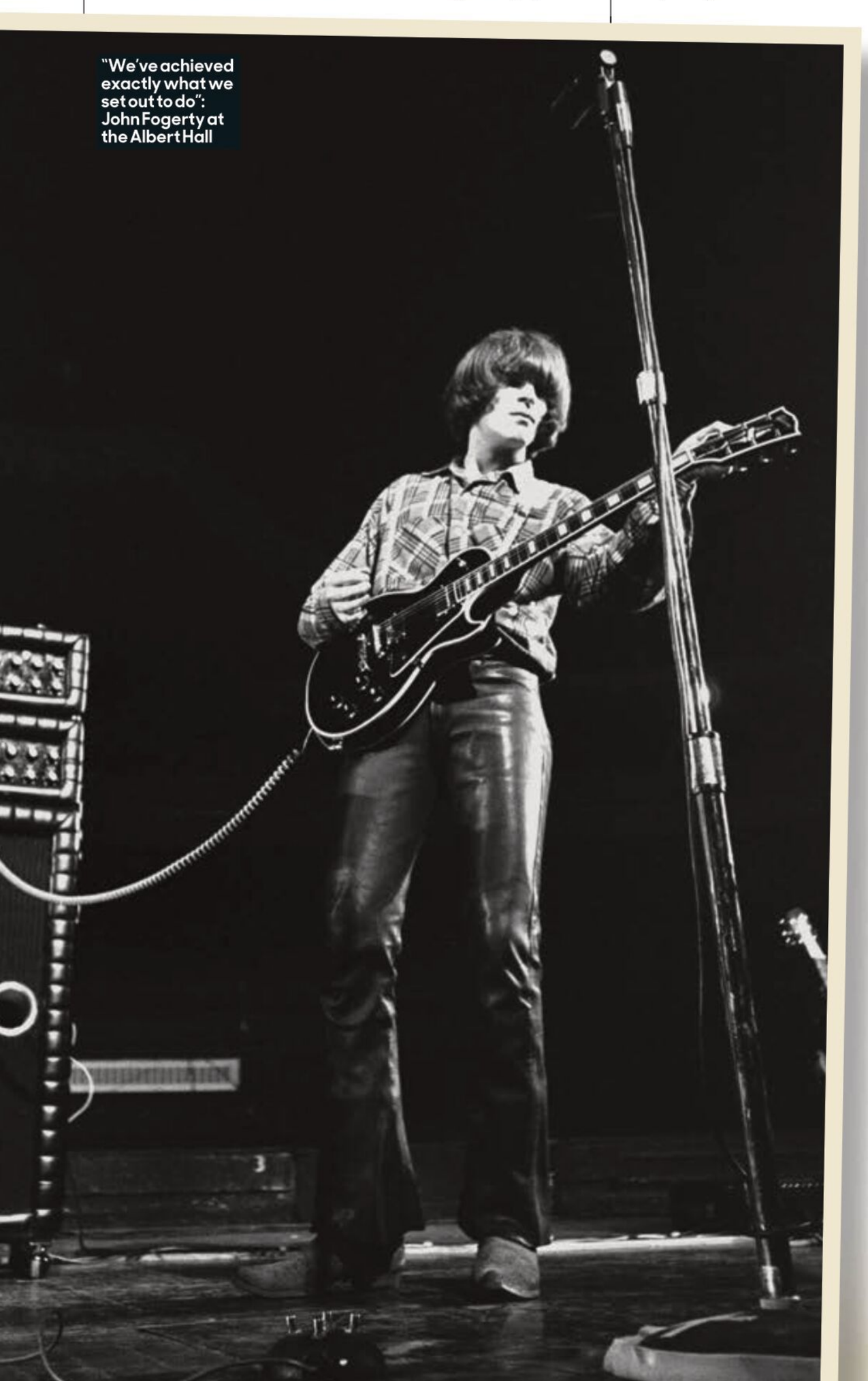
Eventually the party got underway and a selection of fine foods and wine was placed in front of us. The Fogertys' younger brother Bob, who had been photographing the entire tour, was seated next to a gorgeous blonde and was slowly getting very mellow on a bottle of wine. "These tulips are really delicious," Doug exclaimed, as he proceeded to eat one.

"Actually you can live very well on flowers and roots," he continued, astonishing our French guests. After consuming an excellent meal, a birthday cake was produced and presents handed out, some belts and scarves.

In typical French style, it was disclosed during the party that a concert by a French artist had been sandwiched in-between the Creedence's two concerts at Olympia Music Hall. "This means that we'll do a show at seven, and then it'll be around two in the morning before we go on again," Stu informed the others.

"We played really well tonight, just as good as at the Albert Hall, in fact," Tom told everyone over a bowl of onion soup in the famous Au Pied Du Couchon restaurant in Les Halles at 6am. "It was so together, it was beautiful," he concluded.

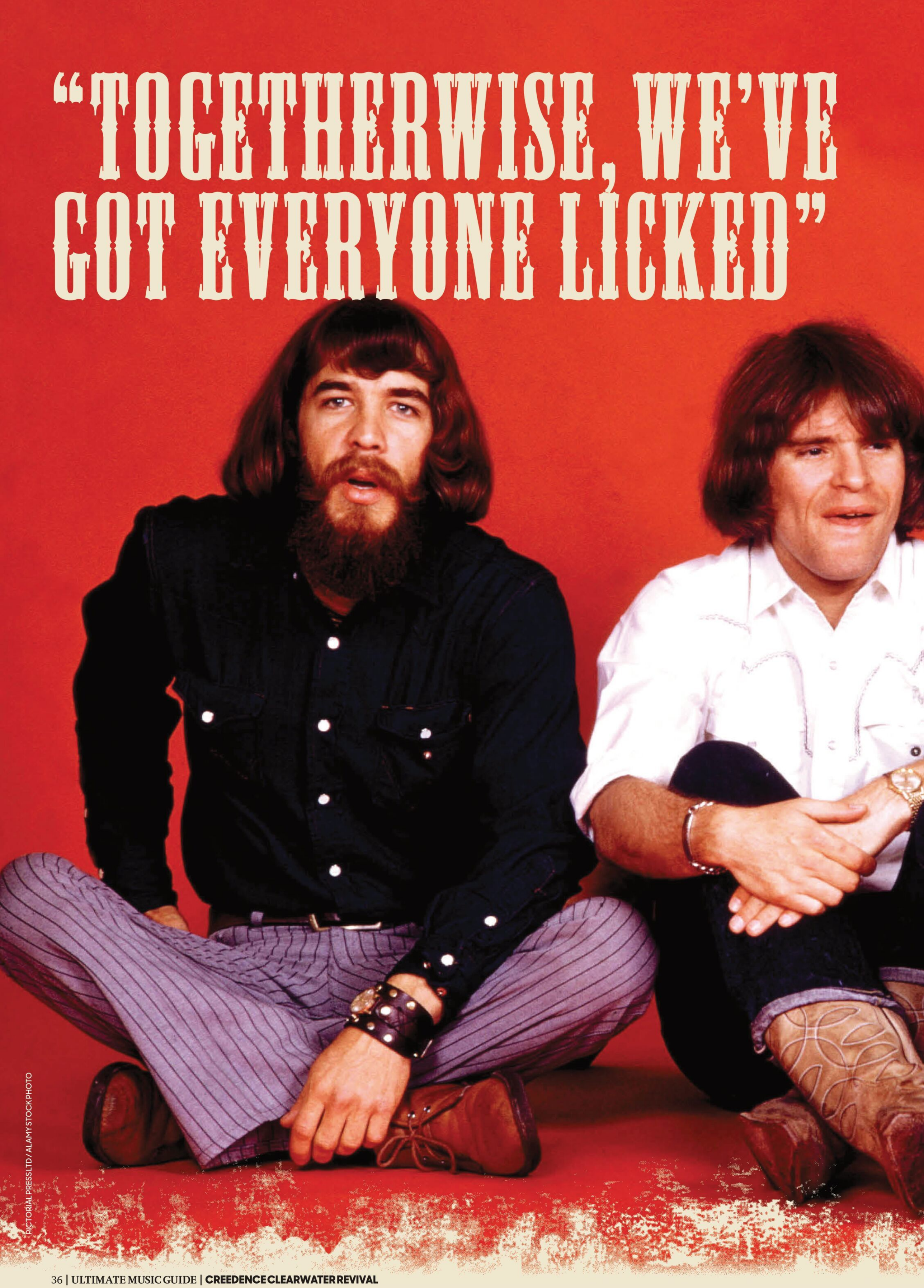
ALL too soon, it was time to drive back to Orly Airport. This time it was to say goodbye. John, Tom, Stu and Doug were heading for San Francisco, and Mr Whiskers and myself for London. Never have I had the pleasure to know four individuals who are so together both on stage and off. GR



"We've achieved exactly what we set out to do": John Fogerty at the Albert Hall

CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE

"TOGETHERWISE, WE'VE GOT EVERYONE LICKED"



PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

NME **travels to California to encounter Creedence on their home turf, as they prepare to launch *Cosmo's Factory*, finding a self-sufficient family scene. These are concerned people, drawing strength from the way they have prospered in spite of being misunderstood. "I feel that I can do it 100 per cent along the line," *John Fogerty* tells *Roy Carr*. "I don't trust anyone else to handle Creedence's affairs."**

NME 11/7/1970

"AFTER many years of continued hardship and struggling, you really do get to know who your friends are," Creedence's ever-smiling bass player Stu Cook informed me. "Everyone on our payroll is just that... a good friend.

"It's the same within the group," Doug "Cosmo" Clifford added, taking up the conversation. "In a lifetime you are lucky to have one true and honest friend. I have three. We were friends long before we became a band, and personally I think that's why we eventually made it. As friends we continually help each other."

Though you only see Doug, Stu, and the Fogerty brothers John and Tom playing on stage, Creedence Clearwater Revival are in fact 11 strong. You often read in the underground press about groups that state that they are really a commune. But if you care to examine the validity of their statements you will in fact discover that they are the only breadwinners amongst a tribe of unproductive hangers-on, groupies, casual friends, children, parrots, cats and dogs. In most cases they hinder instead of help the progress and productivity of the group, usually drawing heavily on their financial resources.

Creedence are without a doubt the most together and self-sufficient unit in the business, in that every member is a personal friend of long standing of each and everyone in the group. More than that, they all work in complete harmony towards a most definite goal.

By sheer coincidence there are no less than three Bruces in the entourage. First off, is tour and road manager Bruce Young, physically a giant but by nature a most kind and gentle being. Then there is Bruce Koutz, one half of their unbeatable equipment team. And last but not least Bruce Burns, also known as Captain America... sound engineer and breaker of young girls' hearts.

It was Bruce Young, also referred to as "Jesus" (after you've met him you'll know why), who Stu Cook talked about first of all.

"Bruce used to hang around with us, and help set up the equipment when we were at Deno & Carlo's. At that time he was working as a youth councillor at a juvenile detention centre. In those very early days, we'd even go out and set up our own equipment at the Fillmore West. After which we'd reappear with our instruments and go out on stage and play."

Retelling how the other members joined the Creedence fold, Stu disclosed: "Koutzy was Tom and Doug's mailman, while Ray Francois, who is our other equipment man, was originally our butcher."

Then speaking about their very amiable and non-hustling press officer Jake Rohrer, Stu had this to say: "Jake, like everyone else, is an old friend from our high school days. At one time Jake was an auto salesman, and it just so happened that we all had French cars in various roadworthy conditions.

"When we were all broke, which was quite often the case, Jake use to fit us out with spare parts for our automobiles, never asking for payment. As soon as Creedence got enough bread together we hired them all. And that's how we've remained."

The latest acquisition to the family has been the near-legendary Captain America, alias Bruce Burns, who surprised everyone with his hitherto unknown talent and versatility when he got up on stage one evening and performed at the famed Club Den Gronne in Copenhagen.

"He really understands what we want and sees that we get it," Cosmo declared. "Bruce even went so far as to get copies of all our albums and singles, and studied them for two weeks so that he could help us re-create our record sound effectively on stage."

Those of you who've been fortunate enough to see a Creedence concert will agree that he's done a most commendable job. In actual fact it takes Captain America, Koutzy and Ray all of six hours to unpack, assemble, check and re-check all the complex equipment prior to each public performance.

Everywhere that Creedence goes, you're bound to find yet another member of the Fogerty family in attendance, namely their younger brother and official lensman Bobby, who documents their every movement on celluloid.

"Young Bobby really had his mind well and truly blown on our eventful European trip," Stu said with a wide grin, remembering some unprintable episodes.

Though she never takes to the road with the entourage, a pretty secretary, Mary Walsh, is the 11th and equally essential member of the team. While the gang goes out to play, Mary stays behind to hold the fort, or to be more specific the "factory."

For that is what Creedence's HQ in Oakland is called – a converted warehouse storing many diverse amenities, and the title of their next album. Included is the group's comfortable practice studio, richly carpeted in red and surrounded by 12-foot blue velvet drapes. An indoor basketball court, plus ping-pong, and pool tables, administrative offices, and the large wagon in which all the group's tons of equipment is transported across America.

It was Stu that summed up exactly where they are all at when he told me, "Musician-wise, we may not be the best band in the world, but togetherwise we've got everyone licked. It's just like the turtle and the hare. There's much more to showbusiness than talent. It's knowing what to do with it that counts."

NME 18/7/1970

JOHN FOGERTY has only one fear... namely, that one day he will discover his own creative limitations before he has had time to fulfil his ambition. And that being to improve the power of communications between people.

JEFF HOCHBERG/GETTY IMAGES

Clifford and Fogerty, Sam Houston Coliseum, Texas, July 11, 1970

To this end he wants everyone throughout the world to understand exactly what Creedence Clearwater Revival are about, so that he can help further this cause. John Fogerty is one of life's observers, resolving his thoughts into music. Because he is aware that music is now the quickest and most effective media of mass communication.

If the lyrics can also convey the same feeling then he's more than satisfied. Indeed, John is aware that "most of life is lived on the defensive. People are still fighting the elements. Nobody really stops to think what they are really doing here."

John does. For he is desperately trying to master it. If he eventually does, he admits with a smile that he'll be the first one who has ever achieved it. The main thing is that the determination to succeed is there. His deductions are that most of us live a life of clichés absorbed by our own generation.

Now if we could only communicate telepathically, there would be far less chance of misconstruing. Jealousy, to name just one human failing, would be vanquished from our society.

He feels that another John, namely Lennon, has some of the right ideas. "I appreciate what he is doing, especially in the position that he's in... I feel that he's making such an honest effort."

Though at the present time John Fogerty is satisfied that Creedence are moving in the right direction, he feels that he's not going fast enough. But then he is for ever striving to expand the boundaries of his prolific talents.

Knowing John, I sometimes wonder where he gets all his untiring strength from, still remaining his amazingly cool, relaxed and amiable self. In this day and age, it's hard enough to sustain the position as the mentor of one of the most consistently successful groups in the still brief annals of rock history.

As if this wasn't enough he's taken everything a whole stage further by not only being singer, guitarist and songwriter, but Creedence's record producer, manager and agent. His reason for undertaking all these roles is simple.

"I feel that I can do it 100 per cent along the line. Let's be honest, most managements don't instigate things. I don't trust anyone else to handle Creedence's affairs. Through experience I found that in actual fact I was always the manager because they had to come to me for all decisions."

All the work, planning and mental fatigue that goes with running such an operation as Creedence never ever seems to get John down, if it does, he never shows it. For he never gets in a bad mood. Seemingly, his big release is a recently acquired Honda 450 motorbike, which proves to be his greatest source of inspiration when songwriting... in a car he feels closed in.

Out in the Californian sun and the wind, he is completely alone, free and happy. Hummin' and whistlin' to himself, waving to every friendly face that he sees and sometimes the unfriendly ones. It is in this relaxed environment that he lets his subconscious take over and subsequently that is how he came to write CCR's latest success "Up Around The Bend".

Just cruising along on his Honda, he is conscious that there is adventure in every curve in the road. One summer's day, he passed a sign near the Berkeley Mariner. As he'd never seen it, he decided to follow the sign, for as he put it he just didn't know what was waiting just up around the bend.

It's the same with his much recorded "Proud Mary", of which he is most happy. "For it was my idea of a paddle-steamer, while 'Commotion' was inspired by New York City, and I feel that I have captured the intensity of all the rushing about that goes on in that metropolis."

"THERE'S MUCH MORE TO SHOWBUSINESS THAN TALENT"

Stu Cook

I recently wrote that John Fogerty is the almost antithesis of the contrived pop star image and perhaps one of the most astute personalities to ever emerge in the business. Finger-poppin' trendies and sensation seekers just gawp and mumble, "Like man, he's a genius," without fully understanding the implications of the word.

John understands fully when he declares. "It's the majority who decides who is going to be the minority... geniuses. There are so many people going around in the business telling YOU that they are geniuses. They'll tell you that they are so creative, when in reality they are non-creative. They just have no track record whatsoever."

John Fogerty is simply a most likeable and extremely talented guy who, after many years of personal and artistic struggling knew what to do with his gift and succeeded where others had failed.

NME 25/7/1970

I WOULDN'T be at all surprised to open up my newspaper one morning and read to my delight that Doug Clifford had entered, and maybe even won the world famous Tour de France bicycle race.

For two-wheelers are his great passion. Around the streets of Berkeley, Cosmo and his 10-Speed Schwinn bike have now become a most familiar and inseparable fixture. You can almost set your watch by him.

Between 12.45 and 1.01 pm Monday through Friday, you can witness the spectacle of Creedence's drummer zooming along the 31 miles from his home, en route to the famed 'factory' in Oakland for the group's daily rehearsal.

Such is the warm affection and esteem in which John, Tom and Stu hold Doug that they even went so far as to title their new album after him... *Cosmo's Factory*. Which, as you can see, has as its cover a photograph of the foursome with Cosmo sitting proudly astride his bike.

This is his favourite means of transportation. Long black limousines and such "compulsory" pop-star trappings are just not his scene. That's not where his head is at. For apart from Creedence Clearwater Revival and his lovely wife and small son, he just has no social interests.

"I'd rather be treated as a human being than as part of any syndrome. Originally, I thought that's what I wanted," he admits. "But it's only when you're away from those things that you dearly love the most that you fully realise how much they really mean to you."

As Brent Clifford approaches his very first birthday, he is still totally innocent of all that is around him. Toddlin' about wide-eyed in the San Franciscan sunshine, he is still amazed at anything and everything. For him it is still a wonderful world of butterflies, *Captain Kangaroo*, and the love of his mummy and daddy.

Doug, like all proud fathers, hopes that it will be possible for not only his son, but ➤

also for those of other men, to grow up in a society free of conflict and violence. For young Brent to be blessed with complete physical and spiritual life is his utmost desire. To this end he has become deeply involved with the study of ecology.

For like so many of the new generation, Doug is concerned with the rather careless and unnatural way in which man is trying to conquer nature. Relating to this, Doug said, "I love unadulterated woods and forests. But the way things look now, by the time Brent reaches my age they may have vanished. I'm really afraid of man's inhumanity to man and to himself."

What scares Doug is that he sometimes gets involved in this macabre merry-go-round.

Of all the four members of CCR, Cosmo is perhaps facially the easiest one to recognise. His open face being haloed in a mass of thick brown wavy hair. Forever camping it up, he is always prepared for a laugh; in fact he acts as a safety valve for the rest of the band. Easing the tension and the pressures when the going gets tough.

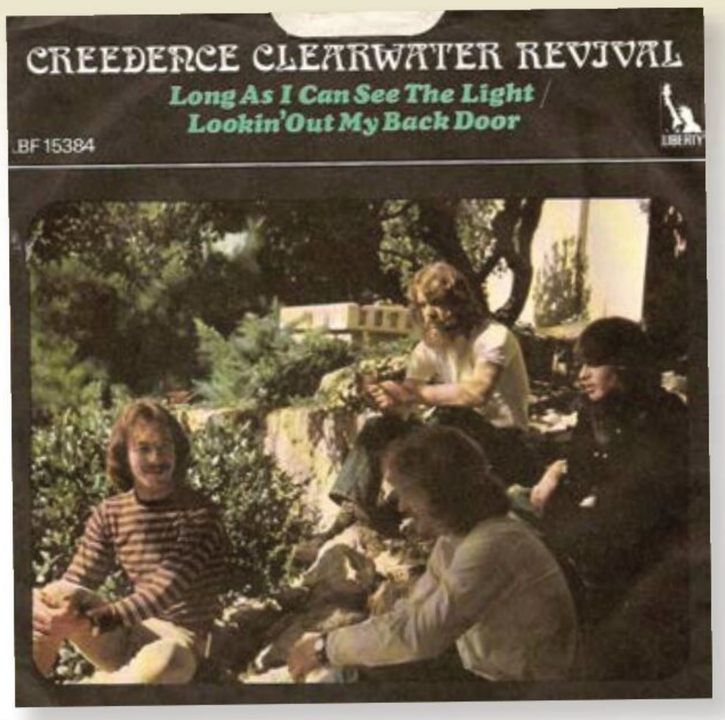
JOHN FOGERTY: "*Cosmo's Factory* was probably the easiest and most fun album we've ever done, that is in musical terms. The music tracks were all done in two sessions. The vocals and overlays took another two sessions and we had it completed in less than a week. I think it was probably the smoothest recording session we ever had... no equipment breakdowns or bummers of any kind."

About the inclusion of the three oldies, Stu Cook revealed: "Some of the oldies on this album are songs we've always liked and in some ways they are perhaps responsible for us getting together in the first place. It was guys like Scotty Moore (Elvis's lead guitarist) and Roy Orbison that initially made John decide he had to be a guitar player and songs like 'Ooby Dooby' and 'My Baby Left Me' that infected all of us with the desire to play in a group."

John was more explicit: "The arrangements aren't specially anything new as far as 'Ooby Dooby' and 'My Baby Left Me' are concerned... I'm rather pleased that we were able to copy as well as we did! They're pretty old tunes and go back over 12 years. I like the way we've done them and saw no need for great changes. 'Grapevine' is a bit different. It's a much newer tune and has been done by more people. I really like the lyrics and the chord progressions and I have been toying with the song for about a year on my own. The instrumental part of it was mostly studio conceived. I just let the tape run.

"We had no idea it would be over 10 minutes until it was all done. 'Before You Accuse Me' is a song we used to do in our bar act as The Golliwogs years ago. We recorded it for our first album, but I cut it out. I was disappointed in the sound, but knew that it would come sooner or later. Instrumentally the arrangement is further from the original than the others, but the song as a total sound still follows the same pattern as Bo Diddley's."

"'As Long As I Can See The Light' is by far my favourite cut on the album," Tom Fogerty states. "I think it's the best thing we've ever done and possibly will ever do. It's really different... John's sax playing just knocks me out."



DOUG (COSMO) CLIFFORD, after whom the album is dedicated, likes another track. "'Looking Out Of My Back Door' is my favourite at the moment. Very country to be sure, but a real upper. I like happy songs. The time change at the end and John's dobro make it different from the other countryish things we've done."

The Beatles and others tried to "Get Back" to where this album begins. Not only will this album prove a monster best seller, but also owning-up time for many folks.

"*COSMO'S FACTORY* WAS THE EASIEST ALBUM WE'VER EVER DONE IN MUSICAL TERMS"

John Fogerty

NME 1/8/1970

IF you want to broaden the ever-present smile on Tom Fogerty's friendly face, just call him lean, clean and bluesy, and the odds are that he'll fall about laughing.

For lean, clean and bluesy is the way in which a totally unaware American hack writer tried to turn Creedence Clearwater into one-dimensional cardboard cut-out characters when reviewing one of their concerts.

This completely ineffectual phrase has become such a standing in-joke within the group that it has appeared in the form of a sign on the front sleeve of their new album, *Cosmo's Factory*.

On close examination of the photograph, you can observe that Tom, or "Crunchy" as he is called by the rest of the group, is reclining with "the slogan" clearly visible at his feet and just the hint of a smile on his lips.

Tom's outward appearance of adult frivolity makes him a very fine ambassador for Creedence, and something of a wit. However, he has much on a diversity of subjects, but will not reveal his thoughts to everyone.

Those fortunate enough to win his confidence will find that not only is he a most articulate talker, but that they will have gained a true and trusted friend.

Almost a visual reincarnation of an early American frontiersman, the eldest of the performing Fogerty brothers cuts quite a handsome dash with his shoulder-length fair hair and moustache, faded Levi's and western boots. The genuine down-home funkiness of his appearance, like that of the rest of the group, is a reflection on the honest earthiness of their music

Like his three compadres, Crunchy has really got his head together, though like each and every one of us he has flashes of self-doubt, but these are just momentary. He finds that his lifestyle is strengthened through his admiration for such people as John Lennon, who he feels has the courage of his convictions to pursue his rather unorthodox existence.

Casual conversations with Tom have the most regular tendency of turning into serious all-night discussions which give much insight to his probing character.

Married, with four children, two boys Scott aged seven, and Jett who is a year younger, plus twin girls Kristine and Jill who are approaching their first birthday, Tom is concerned that his success doesn't have an adverse effect on their childhood: "I want them to be unaffected by my success as part of Creedence. It's important that they lead their own lives. I don't want them to become poor-little-rich-kids. That's why it's essential for them to grow up with the same minds as other kids. And not with any feeling of superiority over those much less fortunate than themselves.

"If I sent them to private school this could easily happen. For they usually become precocious sub-teen jet-setters."

Though Tom comes from a religious background, he is also very much against sending his children to a school that is run by a religious organisation. His reasons being: "Such establishments breed discrimination and prejudice."

He also carries this same opinion about nationalism. "I have this fear that no matter what we, the people try to do, that as long as nationalism exists there will eventually be yet another worldwide holocaust."

Saddened by this, he honestly feels that the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are looming on the distant horizon. "All parties are still economic structures. In some cases, they are state run, others it's private industry. It's not a language barrier.

"The people in control have this feeling that they are completely right and that everyone else is totally wrong."

All his thoughts and conclusions were verified when Creedence made (two) trips to Germany during their first European concert tour. In Berlin he observed: "The last war is still very apparent not only in people's minds but visually," referring to the Berlin Wall and the massive build-up of troops and armaments he witnessed first hand in both the East and West sectors. Indeed, Berlin had a depressing effect on members of the entourage.

"One way I suppose it's good, because it may act as a future deterrent," he said, but speaking on the almost childishness of the situation he stated, "It's also sad and very depressing that all this is so prominent in their lives."

To say that Tom Fogerty is one of nature's gentlemen would be to pay him the highest of compliments.

Outtake from *Willy And The Poor Boys* cover. Duck Kee Market, Oakland, CA

NME 8/8/1970

IN the middle of any conversation with Stu Cook, Creedence's bespectacled bassist, he is quite prone to suddenly dig deep into his inseparable canvas hold-all, in one swift motion whip out his Nikkomat and promptly take your photograph.

Such unexpected incidents have resulted in the most bewildering of side effects on his interviewers. From females, it has brought about an amazing transition.

This same procedure has been applied to numerous professional lensmen. Many of them end up with a photograph of Stu-photographing-them-photographing-Stu and vice-versa. This may give a first-hand impression that Creedence's only college graduate is just a camera-happy shutter-bug. Quite the reverse. For Stu is really into the creative art of photography, having set up his very own elaborate darkroom in the basement of his newly acquired home.

This is a still-unfurnished, 30-room house in Berkeley, which stands in a half-acre plot Stu bought. Complete with it's very own forest and fresh-water creek, it's just six blocks from fellow Creedence Cosmo's happy homestead.

"I like to have nice photographs around my home and at Christmas time I like to give them to my close friends as personal gifts," he told me, revealing one very practical and pleasurable end-product of his great interest.

"My next stage is to get into 16mm movies. I have many ideas I would like to experiment with. Some of these would naturally include the rest of the group."

Stu is ecstatic that his bride Jackie is interested in the actual mechanics of photography and can help him with his hobby.

Though the majority of the press still seem to home in on John Fogerty for most of their quotes, anyone taking sufficient time out to converse with Stu will find him most informative and quoteworthy. He is probably the most down-to earth narrator and pulls no punches when evaluating the many things that influence his personal lifestyle.

Of the music industry he is perhaps the most critical, not without reason, for he still vividly remembers the many years of hardship when they slowly progressed to being Creedence Clearwater Revival via the Blue Velvets and The Golliwogs.

"I can't handle the insincerity, the lies and all the cheating that goes on," he admits. "This always results in the art being completely sold right on down the line. There are still far too many money-grabbers around the business for comfort. That's why we decided to go it alone."

On the subject of Creedence he clearly defines: "We are an entity. Why should a band have to work for the Establishment, if it is possible to set up their own organisation?

"This makes people work with, instead of for, you. It can be done and we've proved it. We hire instead of being hired. Every band could get it together. All it needs is the effort and the sheer determination to succeed.

"I don't like the false show-biz scene that also prevails today. Luckily, there are dedicated people like Fillmore boss Bill Graham, like Lou Robin and Tom Hewlett, who really know what they are doing. Whenever possible it's the best thing to work in collaboration with guys like that."

More than any other group in the history of rock, John, Tom, Doug and Stu (and their entourage) have proved to be a perfect example of peaceful creative coexistence.

Referring to this almost idyllic state of affairs, he is obviously disturbed by the increasing amount of turmoil and armed conflict on our planet.

"As a group we get on so well together. The only thing that could possibly hurt us would be a rapid acceleration of the violence going on all over the world."

He not only means the Far East but the increasing social upheaval and unrest within the boundaries of the United States. President Nixon worries him more than any single human being, for the president's policies both at home and abroad have greatly disturbed young America.

"I only hope I don't have to move to Switzerland to live out my lifestyle," he confesses. "I'm afraid that the world will blow itself up before we get to do our thing." This may appear to be a very personal and selfish statement, but it is not intended that way. Stu has a great love of humanity... and of being a Creedence.

"It's because the band is the most important thing to me. I could rehearse and play all the time. In fact, it could take up a lot more of my time.

"If we had war we could lose it all."

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Released: JULY 8, 1970

COSMO'S FACTORY

Trouble at home and abroad. Balancing their rising incandescence over Vietnam and US gun culture with urgent dream visions and good-time touring tunes, Creedence reach a best-selling "culmination". *By Allan Jones*

LIKE Little Richard or a meth lab fire, the track we're listening to seems to be out of control, no telling right now where it's going next. For its first couple of minutes, it sounded like apocalyptic rockabilly; a mangled, distorted version of the wild-eyed noise made by raw-boned boys in a tar paper studio, somewhere off a dirt road south of Memphis in about 1953. This was 1970, however, and the band making a racket in a San Francisco studio was Creedence Clearwater Revival, led by John Fogerty, at 24 already the principal author of four multi-million-selling albums.

The track currently playing was introduced by incinerating guitar licks, the equivalent of lightning flashes seen through a keyhole; a concentrated brilliance, hissing with accelerant. The rhythm section had meanwhile entered the room as if they'd shoulder-barged a door off its hinges, laying into a thuggish beat. On top of this, the voice of something wounded, a howl. There was no poetry attached to the lyric, just brute announcement. *"Mortgage on my car!" "Po-lice on the corner!" "Actors in the White House!"*

A couple of minutes in, the track seems, shuddering, to be grinding to a halt. The long pummelling instrumental break that follows is unexpectedly reminiscent of the serrated chug of something unswerving by The Velvet Underground. An unheard practice tape of "Sister Ray", perhaps. An early version of "What Goes On", maybe. A piano low in the mix, being hammered until its keys bleed, certainly sounds like John Cale has dropped unannounced into the studio.

John Fogerty called it "Ramble Tamble" when it appeared as the opening track on Creedence's fifth album, claiming later that the song came to him, complete, in a dream. It hasn't been heavily anthologised on Creedence compilations, never been on a movie soundtrack or featured in a TV ad. It's rarely mentioned as a catalogue highlight and probably few people would put it without thought on a list of their favourite Creedence songs, as they might "Bad Moon Rising", "Green River", "Lodi", "Proud Mary", "Who'll Stop The Rain", "Fortunate Son", "Travelin' Band" or "Up Around The Bend". Yet "Ramble Tamble" compressed into seven howling minutes much of the astonishing urgency that had attached itself to Creedence since "Proud Mary" and the attendant *Bayou Country* album so spectacularly delivered them from Bay Area obscurity a mere 12 months earlier.

In 1969 alone, they released three albums – a statistical feat matched in the UK by Fairport Convention – one of them going double platinum, the other two going triple platinum. Fogerty ➤

It was almost as if Fogerty believed Creedence couldn't exist without airplay

COSMO'S FACTORY
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3RD GENERATION
CREEDENCE CLEARWATE REVIVAL
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CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
LIBERTY
STEREO
℗ 1970
LBS 83388
Side 1
1. RAMBLE TAMBLE (Fogerty) Burlington 7.09
2. BEFORE YOU ACCUSE ME (McDaniels) Figure Music 3.24
3. TRAVELIN' BAND (Fogerty) Burlington 2.07
4. OOBY DOOBY (Moore/Penner) Southern 2.05
5. LOOKIN' OUT MY BACK DOOR (Fogerty) Burlington 2.31
6. RUN THROUGH THE JUNGLE (Fogerty) Burlington 3.09
A PRODUCT OF DEBUT OF CALIFORNIA

famously had Creedence on a 12-week cycle, releasing a new double A-sided single every three months. It was almost as if he believed Creedence couldn't exist without airplay. Their records on constant rotation, rocking out from every radio in America. He'd got the republic's attention with "Proud Mary". He seemed terrified now of losing it. Their last album, *Willy And The Poor Boys*, released in November 1969, was only just starting a slow chart descent when in January 1970 they put out two new tracks, the anti-Vietnam war anthem "Who'll Stop The Rain" and "Travelin' Band", the latter a tribute to Little Richard that bore a close enough resemblance to "Good Molly, Miss Molly" for lawyers to become involved, Fogerty reaching an out-of-court settlement with them.

Whatever its provenance, "Travelin' Band" was two minutes and two seconds of euphoric rock'n'roll rapture. Even more likably, it was a song that celebrated the muzzle-flash excitement of touring without making a huge fucking drama of lonely hotel rooms, soundchecks or dead groupies in the bathroom. Fogerty wanted horns on it, to give it more of a Stax feel. A phone call and a chartered jet and he could probably have had the Stax Horns themselves in the studio that afternoon. But he'd actually, now that he thought about it, played sax on a song The Golliwogs used to do, one of his brother Tom's, something called "Watusi Lucy". Maybe he could still blow a bit. He rented a sax from a local high school band supply store and played the horn parts himself. It gave the track, he thought, a more "homemade" feel. "Travelin' Band" went to No 2 (kept off No 1 by "Bridge Over Troubled Water") and also turned out to be the first single from Creedence's fourth album in 18 months.

COSMO'S FACTORY was released on July 8, the title referring to Doug Clifford's nickname Cosmo and The Factory, the band's Berkeley office and rehearsal space. Four of its tracks – that is, the two double-A-side singles that preceded the album – were recorded before Creedence's March tour of Europe. The remaining eight were recorded in May at Wally Heider's studio in San Francisco, five of them in one eight-hour session. It would be Creedence's biggest-selling album, their commercial zenith, eventually going quadruple platinum. Fogerty later described it as a "culmination", as if whatever followed would be anticlimax and decline. Which pretty much was the case, with added layers of extraordinary acrimony, as Creedence, within a year, began to unravel.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"They rock with old-time zeal on 'Ooby Dooby' and all the time the guitar, drums and bass hold together like a finely balanced watch movement. But when they get into the very over-long version of 'I Heard It Through The Grapevine', a rather ordinary tune, their ability to break out and improve seems impaired."

CHRIS WELCH, MM, 22/8/1970

"More so than on any of their previous four albums, *Cosmo's Factory* reaffirms that John, Tom, Stu and Cosmo are firmly rooted in rock. Unlike so many others, they have never for once denied their source of inspiration. Quite the contrary, they have always been most proud to acknowledge their heritage and their individual mentors."

ROY CARR, NME, 25/7/1970

Fans taken aback on first listen by the ruptures of "Ramble Tamble" were probably relieved when *Cosmo's Factory* quickly settled into more familiar grooves. Fogerty was always keen to acknowledge the debt Creedence owed to the trailblazing rockers and blues warriors of the 1950s. The cats at Sun and Chess, the wild men and heartbreakers. On previous albums they'd covered Dale Hawkins, Chuck Berry, Wilson Pickett, Little Richard and Ray Charles. For *Cosmo's Factory*, Fogerty picked three favourites from his record collection. There was an affectionate take on Roy Orbison's "Ooby Dooby", a bow to Elvis on Arthur Crudup's "My Baby Left Me". Bo Diddley's "Before You Accuse Me" – a version of which they'd recorded for their first album and abandoned – was here dispatched with the bar room swagger they might have displayed at early residencies as The Golliwogs, at clubs like Berkeley's Monkey Inn and Dino And Carlo's in North Beach.

"Lookin' Out My Back Door", meanwhile, was the happy homecoming of a hard-gigging musician. It was Creedence at their sunniest, a back-porch reverie, musically a nod to the Bakersfield country sound popularised by a namechecked Buck Owens. Creedence didn't smoke weed, do coke or heroin. A couple of beers each after a show might be considered a wild night out. Nevertheless, people heard "Lookin' Out My Back Door" as Fogerty's "dope song". In fact, the anthropomorphic cavalcade it dreamily describes likely owed more to the Uncle Remus stories and Disney's *Song Of The South* than Timothy Leary, pot or LSD. Released as a single in July 1970, it was kept off the top of the US charts by Diana Ross's "Ain't No Mountain High Enough".

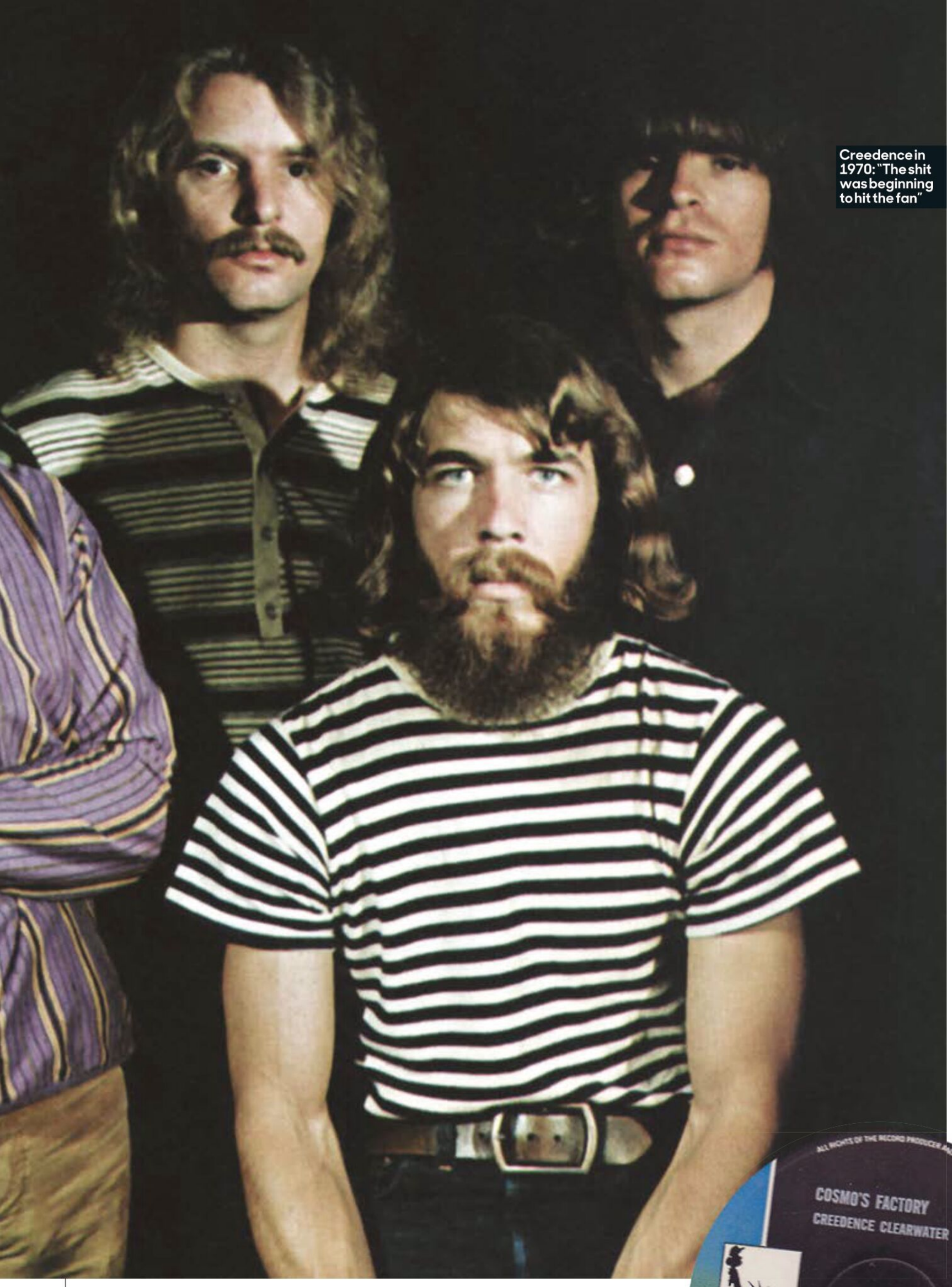
Fogerty had narrowly avoided the Vietnam draft and was vehemently against the war. In 1969, more than 11,000 American soldiers were killed in Vietnam, most from poor working-class backgrounds. A terrifyingly high number of them were black. The ominous premonitions of "Bad Moon Rising", general and unspecific, became the targeted wrath of coruscating anti-war songs like "Fortunate Son" and the epic "Effigy", both from *Willy And The Poor Boys*. Because of its title, "Run Through The Jungle" on *Cosmo's Factory* – a sinewy one-chord drone, drenched in menace – was initially mistaken for another song about the war. Troops on the ground there added it to their in-country playlists. But it was actually about US domestic gun control – *"Two hundred million guns are loaded, Satan cries, 'Take aim!'"* – and the American impulse to shoot on sight.

There was no such confusion over "Who'll Stop The Rain". A lament for the Vietnam dead, the victims of the apparently endless war, it seemed to arrive through parting clouds, or a rising mist, introduced by a haze of acoustic guitars, plucked and strummed. The unusually busy drumming made it sound like something you could march to. Fogerty doesn't once mention Vietnam, but 50 years later you can't listen to "Who'll Stop The Rain" without seeing burning hooches, ransacked villes, Napalmed treelines. Dead bodies in ditches, piled high. Frightened young Americans in cartridge belts and battle fatigues. Weary grunts staring dead-eyed into cameras pointed at them by Tim Page or Don McCullin. Fogerty evoked all this in three verses and just over two minutes. If only Phil Ochs had been so brief!

Written, rehearsed, recorded and mixed

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Fogerty worshipped at the shrine of Sun 45s. He wasn't big on frills



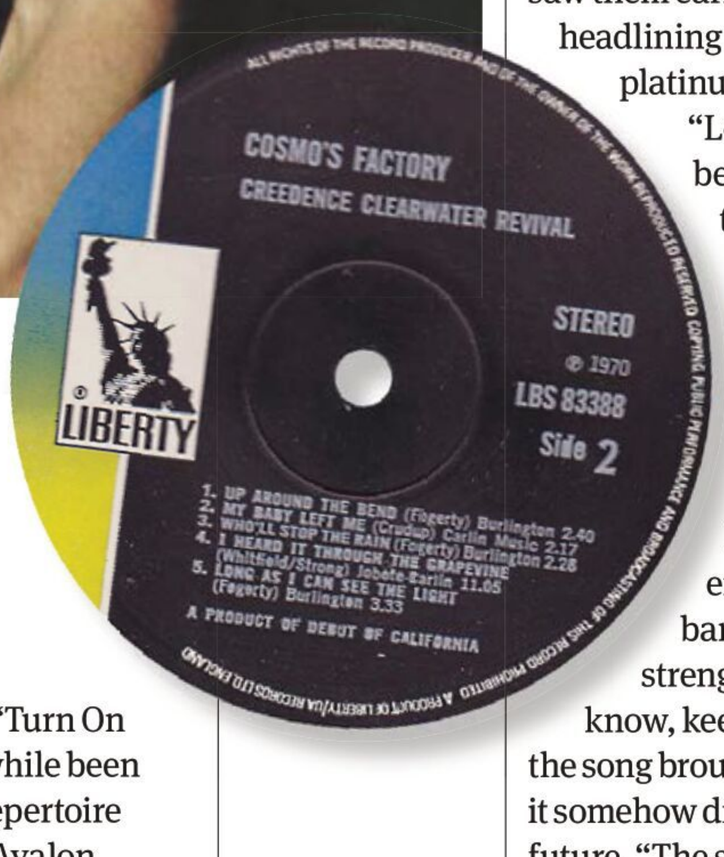
Creedence in 1970: "The shit was beginning to hit the fan"

in the same 72 hours that also yielded "Run Through The Jungle" and introduced by a clarion guitar lick as totemic as the Bobby Gregg snare shot that opened "Like A Rolling Stone", "Up Around The Bend" was Creedence surrendering themselves to ecstasy. It was played as hard as "Fortunate Son", which is to say as hard as rock music's been played. The incandescent anger of the earlier song was replaced, however, by a heroic optimism on a song about flight, escape, a new life. It sounded valedictory, too. The rock'n'roll equivalent of a Viking funeral, a hero sent off with fire. You wondered when Fogerty sang about *"leaving the sinkin' ship behind"* what exactly he was abandoning. America, presumably. Not Creedence, surely? They were more popular than ever, by now officially Bigger Than The Beatles.

It had been a standard thing for Bay Area bands to use blues and R&B standards as launching pads for hours of epic psychedelic noodling. Quicksilver Messenger Service had found enough things to do with Bo Diddley's "Who Do You Love?" to stretch it out over an entire side of 1969 album *Happy Trails*. Bobby "Blue" Bland's 1961 R&B hit "Turn On Your Love Light" had meanwhile been part of The Grateful Dead's repertoire since their first shows at the Avalon Ballroom in 1967, a 15-minute version on 1969's *Live/Dead* double album wholly eclipsed by the 45-minute rendition they played at Woodstock.

Fogerty worshipped at the shrine of Sun 45s. He wasn't big on frills. At the same time, he seemed challenged to prove Creedence could match these extended lysergic excursions. Their versions of "Suzie Q" and "Graveyard Train" were eight minutes long. "Keep On Chooglin'" choogled for over seven minutes, as did "Ramble Tamble". "Effigy" had clocked in at six minutes. Fogerty's ear had been caught by Marvin Gaye's belatedly released version of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine", a huge smash in 1969. Gladys Knight & The Pips' 1968 version, also a big hit, was breezily uptempo. Marvin's was slower, darker, twitchy with suspicion, alert to betrayal. Fogerty switched the electric piano riff on Marvin's record to guitar, told the rhythm section to lean into the song's creepy voodoo rhythms and stretched it out to 11 minutes, his guitar spreading across the track like cracks in a sheet of glass. Other than that, it was still a break-up song. But in Fogerty's version it wasn't a girl he was afraid of losing. It was his band.

There were certainly things happening within Creedence that might have had Fogerty looking over his shoulder. Tom had the usual overlooked older brother thing to deal with. Doug and Stu bitched increasingly about John's autocracy and poor business decisions. As the band's manager, his incompetence in Doug and Stu's chagrined opinion had recently cost them a $50 million pay day. They were all pissed at Fantasy and a deal they'd signed as unknowns that now saw them earning more from a single headlining show than they did from four platinum-rated albums.



"Long As I Can See The Light", the beautiful gospel song that closes the album, in this telling was therefore less a congregational singalong, uplifting in a time of widespread woe, than the sound of a man getting desperate. Exhausted by a binding contract to produce hit after hit, his indenture endless, wary of his mutinous bandmates. Looking for the strength and inspiration to just, you know, keep on chooglin'. Whatever balm the song brought to the listening multitudes, it somehow did not bode well for Creedence's future. "The shit," Fogerty wrote later, "was beginning to hit the fan." &R

TRACKMARKS COSMO'S FACTORY

1. Ramble Tamble ★★★★★
2. Before You Accuse Me ★★★★
3. Travelin' Band ★★★★★
4. Ooby Dooby ★★★★
5. Lookin' Out My Back Door ★★★★★
6. Run Through The Jungle ★★★★★
7. Up Around The Bend ★★★★★
8. My Baby Left Me ★★★★
9. Who'll Stop The Rain ★★★★★
10. I Heard It Through The Grapevine ★★★★★
11. Long As I Can See The Light ★★★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at Wally Heider Studios, San Francisco
Personnel: John Fogerty (lead guitar, vocals, sax, piano), Tom Fogerty (rhythm guitar, backing vocals), Stu Cook (bass, backing vocals), Doug Clifford (bass, backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 1, US 1

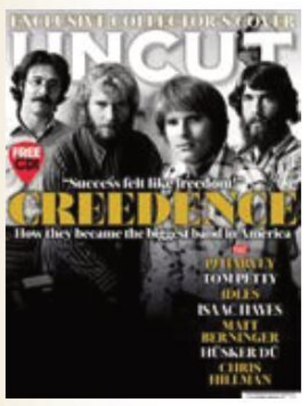
"IT WAS OUR SGT PEPPER..."

As they released *Cosmo's Factory*, Creedence were at the peak of their powers. Their albums and singles topping the charts; The Beatles at their concerts. But while *John Fogerty*'s singular vision birthed their success, it also sowed the seeds of their undoing. "They considered me a tyrant," Fogerty tells *Uncut*'s *Tom Pinnock*. "That's probably true."

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Happier times in London, April 1970

UNCUT: NOVEMBER 2020

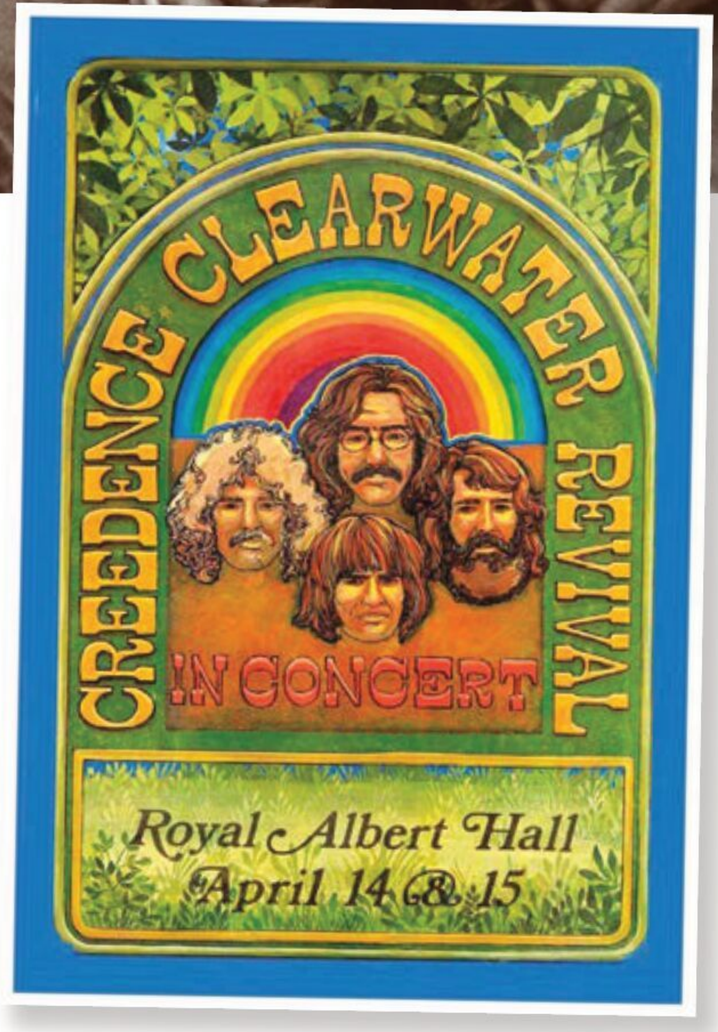


"A COUPLE of The Beatles were at our Royal Albert Hall show," says Doug "Cosmo" Clifford, recalling Creedence's first landmark performances in the UK. "I was pretty excited about that. It was great for us to finally be over in The Beatles' home country."

When, four days earlier, Paul McCartney had officially announced the breakup of the Fabs, Creedence Clearwater Revival were on the Continent, preparing to travel across the Channel to set foot in Britain for the first time. With hindsight, and perhaps a little dramatic licence, it was as if they'd turned up to take on the mantle of the world's biggest band, now that the ruling group had abdicated.

"We were young, so everything was so meaningful," says John Fogerty, looking back on the group's pivotal 1970. "You're pinching yourself, you can't believe that you get to do this. We were kids from El Cerrito; we had never been anywhere. I'd only been outside the States once, to visit Baja California [*in Mexico*] in 1956. But now we were in these places in Europe, playing the Albert Hall and the Olympia in Paris, where all these famous people had played before us."

Like The Beatles, these four young men from the less glamorous east side of the San Francisco Bay had paid their dues, first in a string of unsuccessful groups, then endlessly woodshedding in their practice room, and finally, christened Creedence Clearwater Revival, with a string of hit albums and singles released at an almost-unparalleled rate.



"We were just following our own work ethic," says Stu Cook. "Fogerty believed that if we were ever off the charts then people would forget about us, so that increased the pace of work."

Two months after that first European tour they released *Cosmo's Factory*, in many ways the zenith of their career. Their fifth album and still their biggest selling, it found the quartet adding elements of soul and early rock'n'roll to their swampy sound, stretching out on stunning bookends "Ramble Tamble" and "I Heard It Through The Grapevine".

"We wanted to show more of what we liked," says Fogerty. "What we were about. I was planting the flag for what I and the other guys had grown up with."

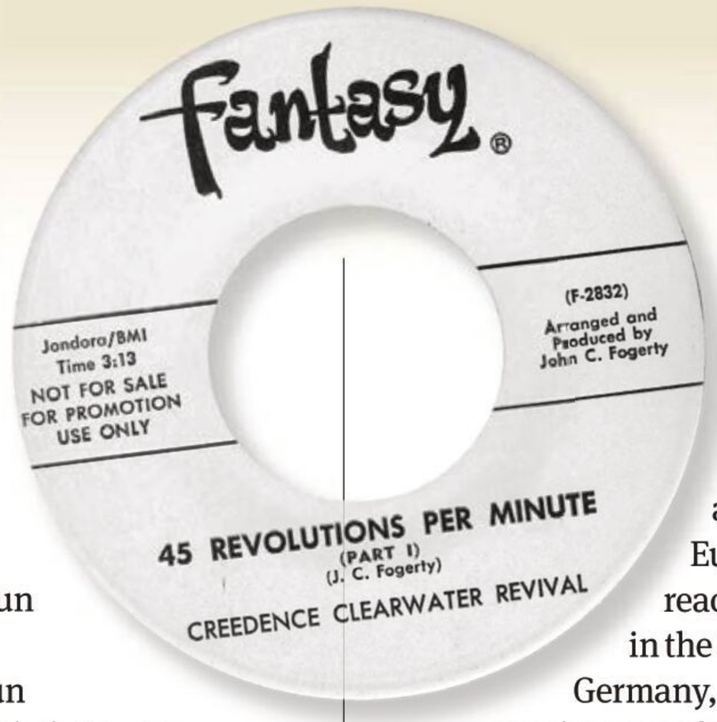
"It was our *Sgt Pepper*, if you will," says Clifford. "I still think *Sgt Pepper* is far superior, but it's a good comparison. That was the peak of The Beatles and their whole thing, and *Cosmo's* was our peak."

The previous year had been spectacular – with three albums and an incendiary Woodstock appearance – but 1970 was the year when Creedence gained it all, and then lost it again. By the time their sixth album, *Pendulum*, appeared in December, the group were already crumbling, with all manner of long-held resentments surfacing. As 1971 dawned, rhythm guitarist Tom Fogerty had left; the group only recorded one final album, 1972's maligned *Mardi Gras*.

"We didn't get where we got just falling off a log," says John Fogerty. "We had to work and work and work just to sound presentable. It's a wonderful thing to have a goal and then to attain it, more or less. You're 23 years old, you've been striving for it all your life, then you get there and you're on the top of the mountain. Right now, I would certainly look around and take notice, but when you're a kid you just take it in your stride: 'Yeah, OK, I knew this would happen...'"

"It was a rocket ride, we went up so fast," recalls Stu Cook. "We burned until we burned out, in three-and-a-half years from start to finish. There's no getting around it – the rocket always runs out of fuel at some point."

CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAG



LIKE many great bands, Creedence's success, both creatively and commercially, was the result of an inspired vision, rigid self-imposed rules and some gruelling work. The original trio – John Fogerty, bassist Stu Cook and drummer Doug Clifford – had been playing together since their early teens, but would probably have remained in obscurity if Fogerty hadn't been drafted into the army in 1966.

"That's where I first evolved as a songwriter," he remembers. "I'd been writing songs since I was eight years old, though I knew my little songs weren't very good. But during all that marching around that they make you do in the army, my brain would take over and go into this place that I call hallucinating or meditating. It got to where I would actually look forward to the marching because I would have about an hour and a half of brain time [*to write*]. Certainly, once I had written 'Proud Mary', I had great confidence about what I should do and therefore what I thought the band should do. If someone had come up with another thing that was as clear as that, I suppose I would have given it a go, but I was the only one that really had that vision."

It left Fogerty in sole charge of the group, deciding their direction and whipping the band into shape. He was the band's manager, as well as producer, singer, lead guitarist and songwriter.

"John was wearing a lot of hats at the time," says Stu Cook. "Managing the band was his least successful activity. But he was on a really hot writing streak – he was driven, for sure."

When real success came, it came quickly for Creedence: their self-titled debut album, released in May 1968 and featuring smash "Suzie Q", was soon followed by three gold-standard classic LPs in 1969 – January's *Bayou Country*, August's *Green River*, which reached No 1 in the US, and November's *Willy And The Poor Boys* – all including singles that became hits on both sides of the Atlantic. On August 17, 1969, they performed at Woodstock, taking the stage at half past midnight with their tightly drilled usual set, including covers of "The Night Time Is The Right Time" and a 10-minute "Suzie Q", alongside their own songs "Born On The Bayou", "Commotion" and "Keep On Chooglin'". The third song of the set was a cover of Wilson Pickett's "Ninety Nine And A Half (Won't Do)", co-written by Steve Cropper and featuring the guitarist alongside bassist Duck Dunn and drummer Al Jackson Jr. Their group, Booker T & The MG's, had turned down an offer to play at Woodstock, but their work increasingly influenced the direction Creedence took as the new decade rolled around.

"I just love all four guys in the MG's," enthuses Fogerty. "What a delightful group of musicians to come together. By the time I got off active duty in '67, the Albert King album *Born Under A Bad Sign* had come out, which the MG's played on, and Booker T co-wrote the title track. Booker T & The MG's were our idols and our template for how you ought to be as a band. They were unselfish in their music."

Much like the dynamic MG's, Creedence gloried in the middle ground – here was a group who were halfway between rock'n'roll and soul, partway between country and swamp-rock – and their first two double-A-sides of 1970 were perfect examples of their mix. First came the Little Richard-esque "Travelin' Band", backed by the melancholic ballad "Who'll Stop The Rain", and then "Run Through The Jungle", eerie, droning and dealing with gun violence in the US, paired with the joyous choogle of "Up Around The Bend".

"We did *Cosmo's* the same way we always did," says Stu Cook, "recording singles and then doing a few tracks to round out the album. When we weren't touring, we'd spend our week rehearsing, learning new material, learning to play our parts individually and then together. There was a chemistry; we always tried to get the song to match John's vision when it was written. When it got close enough then we recorded it."

"I'D BEEN WRITING SONGS SINCE I WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD"
John Fogerty

"I don't think you can say there were any 'lightning in the bottle' moments for them in the studio," says engineer Russ Gary, "because they were so well prepared when they came to record. It was just all around good, especially during that period, when they were on fire."

"Up Around The Bend"/"Run Through The Jungle" came out just as the band headed to Europe, with the former reaching No 3 in the UK, No 1 in the Netherlands and No 2 in Germany, Belgium and Norway.

Heading out of North America brought its own set of problems, though, especially once they reached Scandinavia.

"We did a lot of media in Europe," says Doug Clifford. "Many of the questions we were asked were about politics and social upheaval, which we weren't really prepared to deal with. We wanted to talk about our music and the tour, and we really felt that we were put on the spot, particularly in Sweden with their almost aggressive questioning about the US government's foreign policy. We didn't support it, but of course we didn't have much influence over it either."

Swedish journalists weren't the tour's only inconvenience. One of Fogerty's strict rules, almost a code of musical honour, prohibited encores; Cook, Clifford and Tom Fogerty were not in agreement.

"John wanted to let us know he was in charge, so no more encores," recalls Clifford. "He said, 'Encores are phony, we'll never do one again.' We knew what he was doing. He was flexing his muscle. That was his type of leadership. But it was the beginning of the end; it tore the heart out of the band. You play for the encore – that keeps your level of playing up very high. You're working to get that love back at the end of the show, so you can go out and play a couple more songs and round the set off."

Instead, the group sat backstage listening to the roar of crowds desperate for their return. Back in America from Europe, they put the finishing touches to the new album. The sound was crisper and brighter than on, say, the murkier *Bayou Country*, but there were also subtly new avenues being explored, from "Ramble Tamble", which blossomed from blistering rockabilly into a transcendent and psychedelic middle section, to "Long As I Can See The Light", a slow-burning soul groove complete with John Fogerty on saxophone.

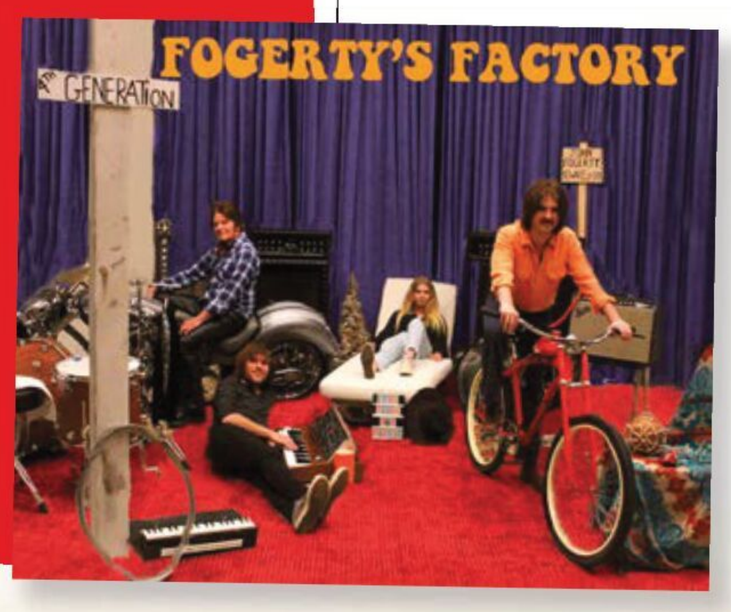
"I would record the band, usually to about six or seven tracks on the eight-track recorder," says Gary. "Then after a few days, when we had all the basic tracks recorded, John Fogerty would come back alone and do the overdubs and then we would mix the songs, just John and myself. That scenario occurred because when the band were down in Los Angeles recording *Bayou Country*, evidently John was not happy with the input from the other members, creatively, and he just simply said, 'I will be doing the overdubs.' And that was it. They would ➤

FOGERTY'S FACTORY

DURING lockdown, Fogerty and his family gathered in their home studio to play some music together. The result, *Fogerty's Factory*, finally became a digital EP, featuring some of Creedence's best-known songs: "Have You Ever Seen The Rain", "Bad Moon Rising", "Fortunate Son" and more.

"We're all living in this very unusual situation, with this hidden, invisible thing, which is even more scary," says Fogerty. "The virus sure has changed the way we live. I hate to say that there's a positive in all of this, but I'm really enjoying being with my family and getting to share all this time. It's been hard to get everyone together over the last few years, so I'm selfishly enjoying this. Being able to make music with my family is just the most amazing feeling.

"When the lockdowns in California started, I made a video as a way of letting my fans know I was still there and that I still think about them. After doing a couple of songs by myself, my wife said, 'Why don't you get the kids involved?' Here it was, a family band right under my nose and I didn't even know it!"



Creedence circa 1970: "We were extravagant"

occasionally show up and perform parts; for example, Tom and Stu sang the background voices with John on 'Who'll Stop The Rain'. But it was only natural that scenario would start a bit of resentment from the others."

More than a quarter of the album was taken up with an 11-minute version of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine", with CCR turning the song into a steadily driving jam that featured some of the ensemble's finest playing.

"We brought that song together backwards," recalls Stu Cook. "We laid out the jam in rough terms and worked on that for two or three weeks to shape it. We got our ideas flowing and settled on things we wanted to do in each different section. After about three weeks, John says, 'OK, now let's put "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" on the front of it.' So that was pretty easy! Our version is based more on Gladys Knight's first version than Marvin Gaye's."

Cook and Clifford's interplay is especially sensitive and dynamic, their parts ebbing and flowing behind the younger Fogerty's solos – but not everyone in the group thought so.

"John and I were listening to a safety copy of the album," says Russ Gary. "Out of the blue he said, 'They're not very good.' I was astounded and I said, 'Well, I think they kick butt!' He says, 'Well, they're improving...' That's when I truly knew that not all was hunky dory within the band."

The Factory itself, a warehouse in Berkeley where the band rehearsed early in their career, was the star of the unusual cover of the album; 'Lean, Clean And Bluesy' read a small sign, somewhat aptly, next to the four band members and some of their prized possessions: among them John Fogerty's motorcycle and favourite Kustom amp, Stu Cook's toy piano and Doug Clifford's racing bike.

"The title was my secret, even after the photo for the cover had been taken," remembers Fogerty. "I thought, 'How do we get our individual personalities known?' I grew up with a blue-collar work ethic, and [*believed*] if you just take the bull by the horns and just work you'll get better. The direction I wanted to go was being able to play 'Try A Little Tenderness' or 'Keep On Running'. I wanted to be able to be that good. That was the musical direction and the discipline."

By the time *Cosmo's Factory* came out on July 16, reaching No 1 in America and across Europe, Creedence had firmly left the clubs and halls behind them; they were now a group that played arenas and auditoriums, sometimes even coliseums and forums.

"You slowly forget that you are not really that broke kid from El Cerrito any more," says Fogerty. "You now have access to money in the bank that you can use to buy a car or use to make a downpayment on a home. But at the time you don't realise how amazingly lucky you are."

> **"I CONSIDERED MYSELF A HIPPIE... WE ALL DID"**
> *John Fogerty*

The group were playing at their peak in the latter half of 1970, as nimble highlights like their medley of "Run Through The Jungle" and "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" from the LA Forum in August showed. Yet there was unhappiness from the others about how Fogerty preferred to tour: they would head out often for a few days only, flying across the States and then back to the Bay Area; even the roadies would take to the air in the first-class cabin.

"We were extravagant, in way," says Clifford. "We didn't make any money touring and we did some huge tours. At the end of the year we each took home $36,000 for our concerts. Of course, back then that was nothing to sneeze at, but for the shows that we played... There was no business manager, everybody flew first class, we played a lot of weekends, we didn't go out for a month and tour. So that was very expensive."

Two weeks after *Cosmo's Factory*'s release, the group flew to the East Coast to take part in an illustrious anti-war benefit concert at New York's Shea Stadium, the Summer Festival For Peace. Also featuring Janis Joplin, Miles Davis, Paul Simon, Steppenwolf and others, it was the first large-scale fundraising concert of its kind, and all the acts played for free in support of the cause.

"I considered myself a hippie," says Fogerty. "We all did. I felt very much a part of the philosophy of the San Francisco scene, both political and social, and I'm still that way. You could probably call me a raging liberal, but Pete Seeger is my idol, and if it was good enough for Pete it's good enough for me."

The Festival For Peace was a success, but Creedence's long hair and opposition to the Vietnam war didn't go down well with everyone on the less progressive East Coast. "Construction guys didn't like us," recalls Doug Clifford. "They didn't know who we were, but they didn't like us because we were long-haired hippies. I saw a guy get shot and killed by the cops in New York, and I ran over to see what had happened. A couple of people on the street shouted at me, 'Get the fuck out of here, you hippie!'"

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

Even on the West Coast Creedence were outsiders, at least as far as the counterculture was concerned. In contrast to the acid-rock groups that dominated San Francisco, they were disciplined, concise and precise, and they didn't overindulge in drink or drugs while they were working. They preferred to associate with cleaner, more soulful groups such as Tower Of Power or the MG's than the Dead or Quicksilver Messenger Service.

"We didn't really fit in with that scene," says Stu Cook, "even though we played the same venues as all the other bands. We had always lived there, it's not like we came from some other state for the Summer Of Love. We had a different approach – in our minds, we were a Top 40 band."

"We got high playing the music," says Clifford. "We had a magic band, we had all those years together to develop our sound and our techniques and our chops in the studio, so if that doesn't do it for you, then why are you here?"

Pendulum increased the expansive feel of *Cosmo's*, with Fogerty and Cook layering up keys, saxophone and percussion on top of their customary chugging momentum. Though still a much underrated album, it found the group on the edge: just before recording had commenced, Tom Fogerty, Cook and Clifford had pleaded with their leader to give them more input to the music.

"The big issue was that they didn't want John telling them so much what direction the music was going in," says John Fogerty. "They considered me a dictator or a tyrant, which I suppose if you view it in those terms, that's probably true – that can be a good or a bad thing. I realised that if the band was to continue with the four of us then I'd better get on board and agree. But we were set to record in two days, so I said, 'I hope you'll let me kinda be in charge for this album, more or less?' They agreed, as long as going forward I allowed everybody to have a voice."

"Tom had quit the band two or three times by then already," says Cook. "He used to be the leader, the singer, then he gracefully stepped [*back*]. We didn't see any reason why John couldn't let Tom sing a song – we were doing at least one or two cover songs on each album, why couldn't Tom sing one of those? [*The problem was*] we didn't have good management that could separate us like opponents in a boxing match. None of us were unreasonable, but things kept building without any resolution, so finally Tom just said, 'OK, that's it, I'm out.'"

"We finished *Pendulum*, it came out before Christmas and a couple of weeks later Tom announced he wanted to leave," says Fogerty. "We'd worked so hard on this thing we'd created together, it seemed horrible to lose that thing, especially my own brother, so I told our roadie Bruce Young, who was doing the emissary work, to tell Tom that we'll all just take a break and everyone can do what they want to do, record a solo album, go fishing for a year, whatever... But Tom wanted a clean break. It was painful."

If the three surviving members of Creedence still don't see eye to eye on the fatal injury the group suffered at the end of 1970, in 2020 they're at least each able to appreciate all they accomplished in that short time when they were probably the biggest band in the world.

"The top of the mountain was *Cosmo's Factory*," says Doug Clifford. "We were the Roman candle of rock'n'roll, working at such a pace that we'd put a single out and both sides would be a hit. Our dream was a very simple dream, to someday have our songs played on the radio. They're still playing them on the radio now, so I guess that part of the dream came true."

After half a century of animosity, it now seems as if the sheer power of Creedence's music is finally overshadowing any bitterness. These were master craftsmen creating rock'n'roll that sounds even fresher today than it did 50 years ago. If 1970 contained both their peak and their downfall, then that's just a testament to the speed of Creedence's journey.

"I'm humbly pleased that something we made 50 years ago is still relevant, that people still care about it," says Fogerty. "That's just so satisfying, that at that moment in time at least we were all able to cooperate and get something down on tape that's still thought of fondly.

"Success didn't feel like a weight, it felt like freedom. I viewed *Cosmo's Factory* as a culmination, a wrapping up of a section of our career. So I wanted to really load up the album with everything that we were up to that point.

"It meant that I could put our version of [*Arthur Crudup's*] 'My Baby Left Me' on there to show where we came from. It was one of my favourite songs ever. It wasn't until much later that I realised that hearing that for the first time when I was about 10 years old was the moment when I thought, 'This is what I wanna do. I don't know how they do this, but this is what I wanna do.'"

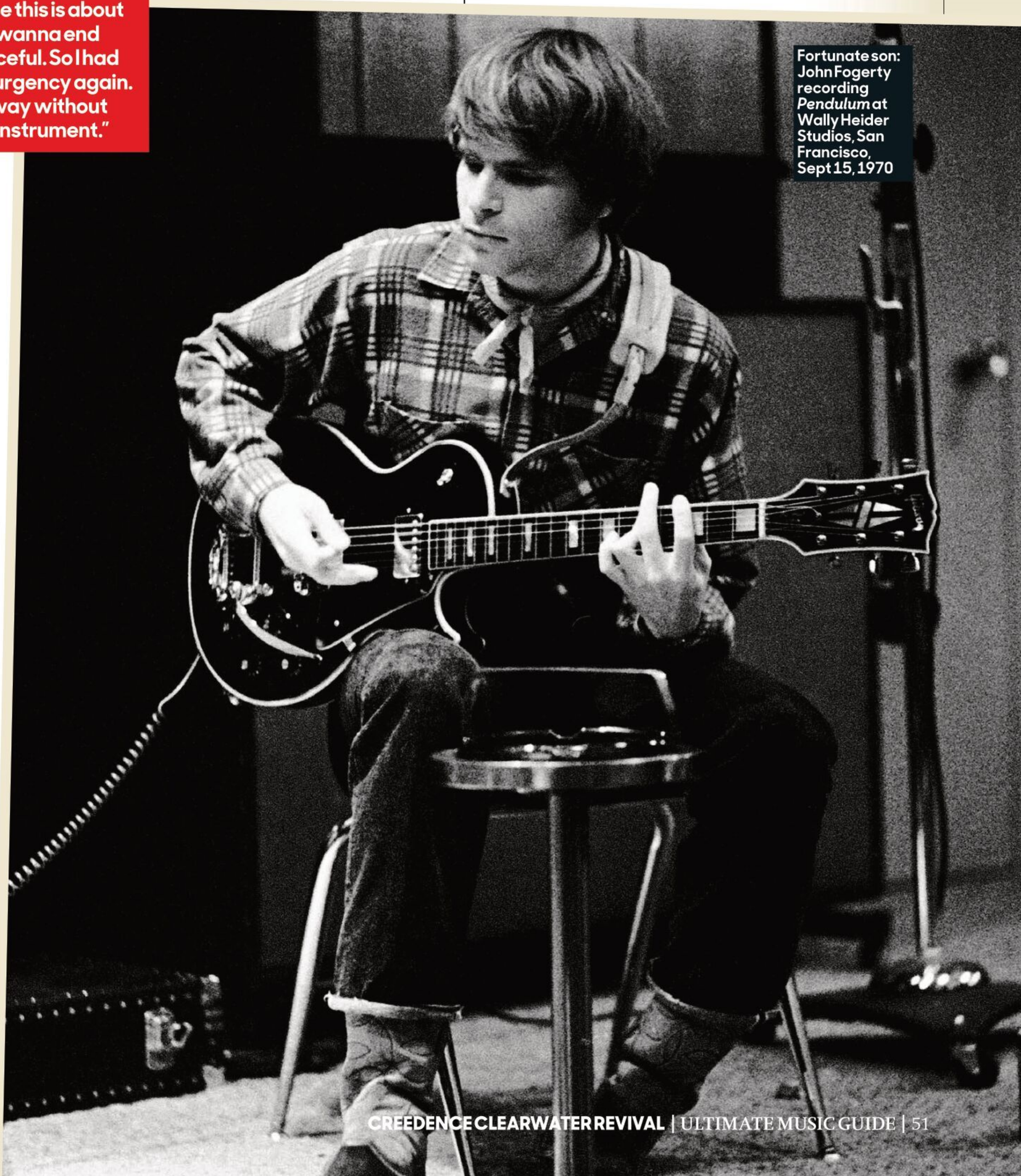
RAMBLE ON!

John Fogerty on the genesis of "Ramble Tamble"

"THIS was one of those amazing times where you realise there's some heavenly radio antennae that comes from God or from the whole universe which is God – it's not coming from you. I was actually lying in bed, and I was trying to fall asleep, but suddenly a sense of urgency came to my mind and I started to hear this melody, which is the beginning vocal part of 'Ramble Tamble'.

"I lay there and ended up envisioning or feeling it all the way through – the words, what the song was about, the 'ramble tamble' part, which seemed a lovely clashing of different words that everyone gets right away. It's not a real phrase, but it describes that particular chaos in your mind.

"About an hour had passed and I could hear the music. I could hear the slow part which meant tranquility, arriving at a peaceful place, but then obviously because this is about rock'n'roll I didn't wanna end there, it's too peaceful. So I had to go back to the urgency again. It was done that way without ever touching an instrument."



Fortunate son: John Fogerty recording *Pendulum* at Wally Heider Studios, San Francisco, Sept 15, 1970

ED CARAEFF/GETTY IMAGES

Released: DECEMBER 7, 1970

PENDULUM

There's mutiny in the ranks, but the captain bolts the cabin door for one last groundbreaking hour at the helm. Destination: credibility.

By Peter Watts

AS Creedence Clearwater Revival returned to Wally Heider's studio in San Francisco for the second time in 1970 following the triumph of *Cosmo's Factory*, John Fogerty knew the clock was ticking. That might have seemed hard to believe to fans and critics just a few short months after *Cosmo...*'s commercial and artistic success, but deep within the quartet turmoil was brewing, particularly between brothers John and Tom. Perhaps that's why John decided to call the next album *Pendulum* – a recognition that the inevitable motion of time was driving the band towards the self-immolation that awaits just about any major band.

The problem came down to the iron grip John Fogerty had established over the band since at least "Proud Mary". He wrote, sang, arranged and produced almost all the material single-handedly – for *Cosmo's Factory* he even designed the cover and picked the album title. After the rest of the band laid down their parts, he stayed in the studio to produce and add overdubs, often laying piano, organ and sax over the original recordings. The band felt they were increasingly being treated as session players rather than equal members, and as their resentment grew, Fogerty doubled down. A couple of days before sessions for *Pendulum* started, the issue was raised in a band meeting. Tom Fogerty, Doug Clifford and Stu Cook stated they wanted more input and John reluctantly agreed – but only, he said, after they had recorded *Pendulum*. And when it came to that album, he refused to give up any ground at all, knowing that this was going to be his last chance to call the shots. If CCR existed in later decades, Fogerty might simply have taken the band name and started again with more compliant partners, but that wasn't how things were done in 1970.

Therefore, despite the outstanding tracking by Clifford, Cook and elder Fogerty, *Pendulum* was even more of a one-man affair than *Cosmo's Factory*. Fogerty conceived the overall direction, he wrote every song, took all the lead vocals and most solos. Whereas previously the band rehearsed at The Factory before taking their songs to Wally Heider's, this time they went into the studio blind, recorded on the hoof and then Fogerty stayed behind for weeks tinkering and overdubbing. A process that usually took 10 days was instead extended to five weeks, something unheard of from this fast-working band.

It seems Fogerty's decision to further extend his control over the sound was partly motivated by a desire to be taken more seriously by the counterculture establishment. It seems odd at this distance to think of Fogerty suffering from self-doubt, but Creedence were ➤

The band felt they were increasingly being treated as session players rather than equals

CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL
Pendulum
ED CARAEFF/WAYNE KIMBELL

CHAMELEON
MOLINA
IT'S JUST A THOUGHT
(WISH I COULD) HIDEAWAY
PAGAN BABY
SAILOR'S LAMENT
BORN TO MOVE
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN
RUDE AWAKENING #2
HEY TONIGHT
Liberty Recor

ALL RIGHTS OF THE RECORD PRODUCER AND OF THE OWNER OF THE WORK REPRODUCED RESERVED COPYING PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED A PRODUCT OF LIBERTY/UA RECORDS LTD ENGLAND
PENDULUM
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
Produced by JOHN C. FOGERTY
A Product of FANTASY RECORDS
STEREO
℗ 1970
LBG 83400
Side 1
1. PAGAN BABY 6.25
2. SAILOR'S LAMENT 3.47
3. CHAMELEON 3.05
4. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN 2.39
5. (WISH I COULD) HIDEAWAY 3.53
(Fogerty) Burlington Music
LIBERTY

Brothers grim: CCR in 1970, with an increasingly frustrated Tom Fogerty (right) soon to depart

seen as a pop band, lacking artistic credibility and not really fitting in with the rest of the SF scene. They lived relatively clean existences, scored regular chart hits and, most importantly, took what was then seen as a pre-*Sgt Pepper* approach to music – at least in terms of how it was packaged as a record. A Creedence album was still put together in the old-fashioned way – a trio of hot singles thrown together with a ragtag collection of covers, curios and whatever happened to be around at the time. It made for endearing and unaffected records, and while that way of working was still common currency among soul and pop acts, grown-up rock bands were expected to take things a little more seriously. The long-player was now a statement, conceived as a whole rather than pulled together on the fly.

Pendulum would be different. This time Fogerty was going to sit down and plan a structured album, one consisting entirely of original material that would stretch the band, taking them into new musical and artistic directions while offering an overall cohesion, perhaps taking the listener on something so bold as a journey. The band still drew on their staples of soul and R&B, but Fogerty was also looking towards the US underground as well as the omnipresent influence of The Band and British heavy rock bands like Led Zep. It was an approach that affected two of the core elements of the CCR experience. This time there would be

Pendulum was what happened when he took the old model as far as it could go

no covers, a first from the band that made their name with their reinterpretation of "Suzie Q" and confirmed it through exceptional versions of "Cotton Fields" and "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" among others. Even more surprisingly, Fogerty didn't want to besmirch his artistic integrity with the stain of commercialism by releasing any singles. For the pre-eminent singles band of their era, this was quite a turnaround.

Fortunately, Fantasy had other ideas, and insisted on the release of another great CCR single, "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?"/"Hey Tonight", continuing a run of corkers surely unparalleled by any band at that time except The Beatles. The double A-side came out early in 1971, a month after *Pendulum* had hit the shelves. "Hey Tonight" was a worthwhile rocker, but the star of the show was the rolling, relentless "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?", complete with delightfully familiar chord changes and singalong swinging chorus. A CCR classic, this was also the one song that directly addressed the issues within the band. Fogerty's passionate vocal warned of sudden rain on a sunny day, starting with the lines "*Someone told me long ago/There's a calm before the storm/I know, it's been comin' for some time*". It was vague enough for some contemporary listeners to interpret it as a warning to the counterculture movement following the events of Altamont and Kent State coming so soon after Woodstock, or even a clumsy metaphor about the Vietnam war with bombs raining down on the South-East Asian jungle. But Fogerty has confirmed it's about the strained relationship between himself, his brother and the rest of the band. Things seemed sunny but they weren't for long.

That pre-session band meeting possibly accounts for the generally morose and uncomfortable mood of the record. It's right there on the album cover – the four members of the group, standing together unnaturally close, staring intently at the viewer as if you have just woken up from a coma or are staring out bug-eyed from the boot of a car following a kidnapping and the protagonists are deciding whether to

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

throw you in the river or convert you to their cult. Tom Fogerty in particular looks as if he's planning human sacrifice, a slightly manic look in the eye that could trigger psychosis for anybody foolish enough to use the album sleeve to roll a joint on. It aligns with the album's overall sentiment, which is far removed from the easygoing communal bonhomie of *Cosmo's Factory*. With that in mind, when *Pendulum* was released, Jon Landau in *Rolling Stone* complained harshly but not entirely unfairly about the album's overall "seriousness" which he adroitly perceived came from Fogerty trying too hard. Ironically, this seriousness was the very quality Fogerty was hoping to attain, and *Rolling Stone* was the audience he was most desperate to impress. That must have stung.

Landau's other criticisms – that the band were stiff and asexual – are easier to dismiss. This is an album of high quality from a band close to the top of their game. *Pendulum* remains largely overlooked, partly because of the sheer genius of the album it followed but also because of its relative lack of singles – and the lack of a killer lead single before the album's release probably accounts for the fact it stuck at No 5 in the US. The good news is that means the records contains several unappreciated gems, some of which are cut from the same cloth as any number of CCR classics and others that show the band's sound moving in a different and sometimes unexpected direction.

Most stark of these is the closing track, "Rude Awakening #2", an instrumental that explores unusual and un-CCR type musical ideas. It starts with a smooth neo-classical rhythm, then starts to build like a minor version of "A Day In The Life" before a buzzing synth takes over to introduce an avant-psych, pseudo-jazz adventure of phasing, random solos, blips and boings, concluding with a fury of discordant orchestration. As with many experimental pieces of this type, the issue isn't whether it's good as much as astonishment that it exists at all. One thing that can be said about it safely is that nobody would ever guess it had been recorded by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Even weirder is the promotional single they recorded at the same time, "45 Revolutions Per Minute", which was eventually released on the band's 2001 boxset. This features the band conducting a joke interview with local DJ Tom Campbell using novelty sound effects, gobbledygook, snippets of music and general Goon-style mayhem. It could almost be a direct rebuke to Landau's accusation that the band lacked a sense of humour and shows their capacity to pull off self-mockery in a manner that was entirely alien to most American groups of the era other than The Monkees. That said, it's not something you are ever going to listen to more than once, other than by mistake.

PENDULUM is stuffed with more conventional CCR goodies. Opening track "Pagan Baby" would be a stone-cold Creedence banger were it a little shorter, starting with a rippling riff and featuring one of Fogerty's most boot-shaking vocals to a heavy rock, Zep-style blues beat. There's also some fabulous guitar playing, one of the few moments on the record where Fogerty really lets rip with the instrument. "Born To Move", introducing Side Two, is cut from similar cloth, another terrific groover with a real Stax vibe thanks to the starbursts of organ that pop out during the low-key middle eight. This is one track on the album that deserves a lot more love.

The two other traditional CCR rockers – "Chameleon" and "Molina" – are slighter. The chief fault of "Chameleon" is the repetition of melody and lyric after a great start, while "Molina" never really gets going at all. Both suffer a little from Fogerty's adoption of the sax over the guitar, with a sax solo often taking the space you'd expect to hear a six-string workout. The instrument gives the album cohesion and speaks of Fogerty's desire to broaden the musical palate, but some of the songs suffer as individual pieces as a result. That sax is first introduced on "Sailor's Lament", one of the album's interesting missteps. It's a subtle spiritual with Fogerty joined by a choir on backing vocals, before eventually giving way to a sax solo. It sounds like CCR trying to be The Band, which isn't a bad thing in principle but doesn't quite come off.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"This isn't a drastic departure from the familiar style of CCR's previous albums, but more of an extension of a phenomenally successful format... The 10 tracks still retain all the pure essence of basic rock music, but this time the sound is much fuller and relaxed, with Tom, Doug and Stu making positive contributions to the overall result."
ROY CARR, NME, 2/21/1971

The remaining two songs are more successful attempts at moving the dial. "(Wish I Could) Hideaway" comes in with heavy organ like Iron Butterfly, before Fogerty delivers another earth-shaking, blue-eyed, Joe Cocker-esque vocal lamenting the end of something – a relationship? His band? – and admitting weakness, loss and regret. It's another track that carries the influence of The Band in its clever blend of influences from rock, soul and folk, as well as its melancholy quality.

That organ is back for "It's Just A Thought", a much underrated statement by Fogerty, a lament at passing time and young man's confession of confusion that captures the overall mood of the album, intermittently expressed on the trio of "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?", "(Wish I Could) Hideaway" and "It's Just A Thought". In retrospect, from these songs it's clear that Fogerty knew what was coming. Within weeks of *Pendulum*'s release, the band would express their frustration and mount a coup against their leader. Not long after that, Tom Fogerty left the band. Wounds were inflicted that still haven't fully healed.

Pendulum should be seen as more than a footnote to Creedence Clearwater Revival's breath-taking hot streak through 1969 and 1970. It's a worthwhile album in its own right and the completion of an essential cycle that started in October 1968 with the recording of *Bayou Country*, when John Fogerty first put his foot down and took control. That iron will, discipline and exceptional songwriting talent had carried the band through two years and five albums, a formidable body of work that led to commercial success and critical acclaim but was always going to accrue resentment and lead to burnout.

Pendulum was what happened when Fogerty took the old model as far as it could go, even as he desperately sought new directions to explore before the crash. He went into *Pendulum* knowing precisely what results his demand for continued control would have but with the self-fulfilling belief that CCR couldn't prosper any other way. It's fitting therefore that *Pendulum* should close with the discordant storm of "Rude Awakening #2", the final sound the original quartet would make together on record, facing the end with their eyes open wide.

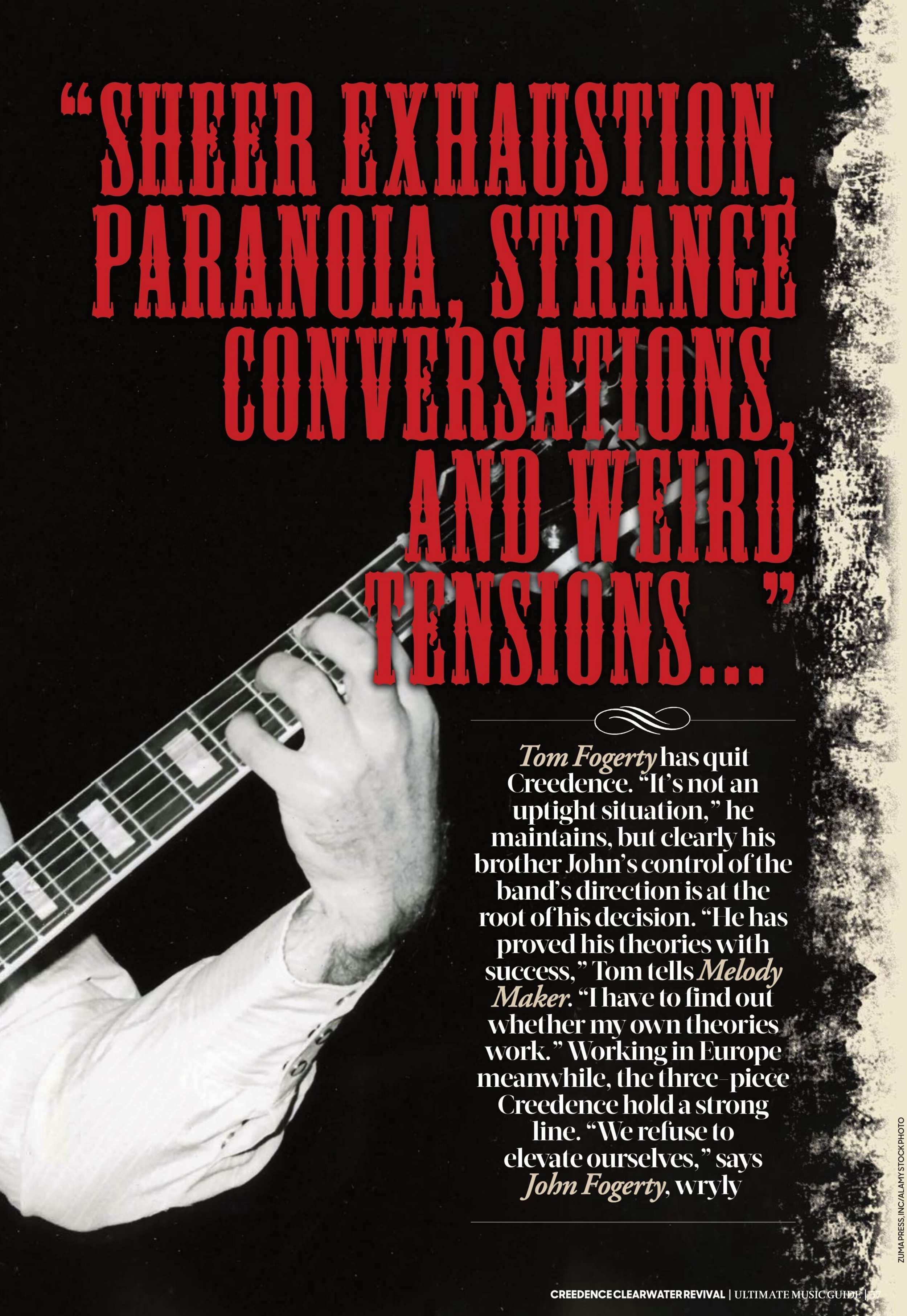
TRACKMARKS PENDULUM

1. Pagan Baby ★★★★
2. Sailor's Lament ★★★★
3. Chameleon ★★★
4. Have You Ever Seen The Rain ★★★★★
5. (I Wish I Could) Hideaway ★★★★
6. Born To Move ★★★★
7. Hey Tonight ★★★★
8. It's Just A Thought ★★★★
9. Molina ★★★
10. Rude Awakening #2 ★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studios, San Francisco
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, lead guitar, piano, organ, Fender Rhodes, saxophone, percussion), Tom Fogerty (rhythm guitar, percussion), Stu Cook (bass guitar, double bass, piano, kalimba, percussion), Doug Clifford (drums, percussion)
Highest chart position: UK 8; US 5

Missing family life: Tom Fogerty with CCR in 1971

"SHEER EXHAUSTION, PARANOIA, STRANGE CONVERSATIONS, AND WEIRD TENSIONS..."



Tom Fogerty has quit Creedence. "It's not an uptight situation," he maintains, but clearly his brother John's control of the band's direction is at the root of his decision. "He has proved his theories with success," Tom tells *Melody Maker*. "I have to find out whether my own theories work." Working in Europe meanwhile, the three-piece Creedence hold a strong line. "We refuse to elevate ourselves," says *John Fogerty*, wryly

ZUMA PRESS, INC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

MELODY MAKER 20/03/1971

"THE best of all possible worlds was for them to accept me leaving and not let it interfere with their plans."

Tom Fogerty was talking calmly and thoughtfully about his decision to leave Creedence Clearwater Revival. Outside the plush cubicle office, one of the smallest in the luxurious new headquarters of Fantasy Records, a grand opening party for the building was in full swing. Fantasy distributors from around the world were flown in, along with business associates, lawyers and assorted writers.

And everyone knew that this building – with its two beautiful 16-track studios, one eight-tracker, mastering room, sauna bath, exercise room and the rest – was a monument to Creedence Clearwater Revival. All was optimism among the far-flung functionaries of Fantasy. It was just a temporary misunderstanding. Tom wouldn't leave Creedence, one of the top groups in the world in terms of record sales and concert sell-outs. But the cheerful smiles didn't hide the worried eyes.

Tom was not thinking about the money generated by Creedence through the pockets of the partygoers outside. And he wasn't talking about dissension within the group.

"It's so hard to take," he said, "because the whole reason why I'm leaving is an abstract. It's just not an uptight situation.

"There are two basic reasons. First, I wasn't able to be the kind of father I expected to be. I was not spending enough time being a father. The pressure of being in the group affected the family, and when I was with the group, the pressures of the family upset me.

"I have two sons, eight and seven, and twin daughters, one, and I don't believe in private schools and nurseries – mother should be a mother and the father should be a father.

"Secondly, it was my own creative drive. We all had it together, but I had a lot more to give of myself that I couldn't do in a group context.

"I was in the position of having to frustrate myself to make something work. I was getting short-tempered, weird and impatient at home and taking it out on the other guys, too. Instead of continuing to have flareups, we talked it over.

"I shed tears, Gail and the boys, too. They're old enough to understand.

"Necessity was the keyword for the last 12 years," Tom explained. "The four of us knew somewhere that we could all work together. So we suppressed our opinions and just did it. The compromises were just little things that many others would have been glad to put up with.

"Twelve years ago I was doing all the writing and I sang the leads. None of it worked out. It was all bad. It didn't work until John started doing it. Now I'm going to try again, but I don't think it's fair for me to ask John to step down and not be the leader just for me to try something.

"He has proved his theories with success. I have to find out whether my own theories work. When we reformed the group as Creedence Clearwater Revival, we created a situation where John was handling the creative end, I was doing the business work, Stu (Cook) did the sound and Doug (Clifford) handled the transportation. This was the set-up.

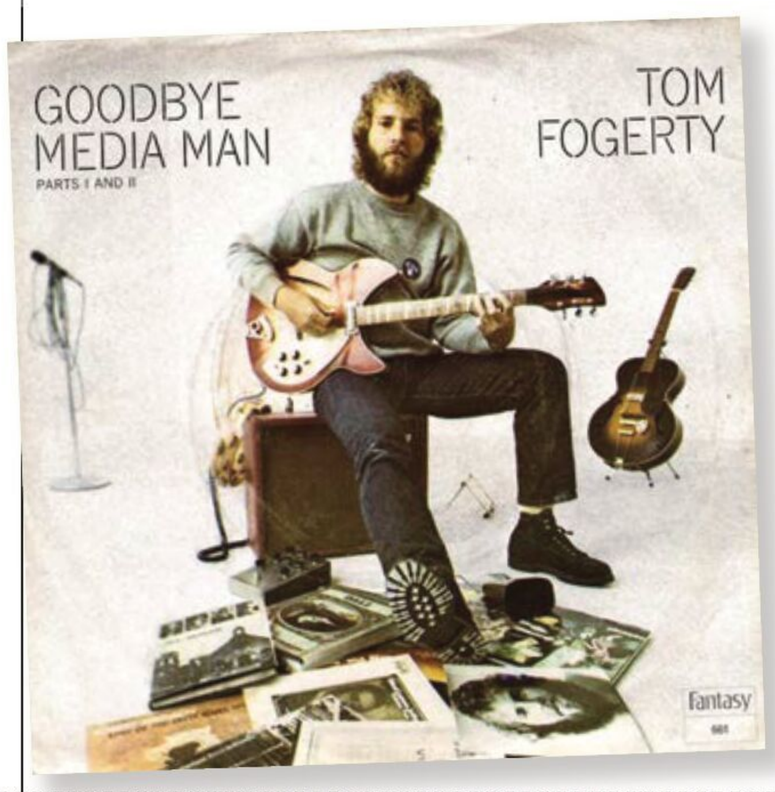
"Now I'm creating a situation where I have to create. Otherwise the frustration would have built to the point where I might be mad in 10 years. I HAVE to do this."

Tom admits that both his age (30 come November) and the relationship between him and his younger brother played roles in his decision.

"Somehow it's an unnatural situation having your younger brother lead the group you're in, yet you can suppress it. Muff Winwood was in the Spencer Davis Group with Stevie. I really would like to talk to him about how he felt. Just imagine having a younger brother like Stevie Winwood. And John is just as talented."

A couple of months ago, Tom, Doug and Stu were going to write songs together, separately from John. "That wouldn't work, and it was my fault," says Tom. "It was polarising the group. I just went one step further."

AL RUDIS



"I WAS WEIRD AND IMPATIENT AND TAKING IT OUT ON THE OTHER GUYS"

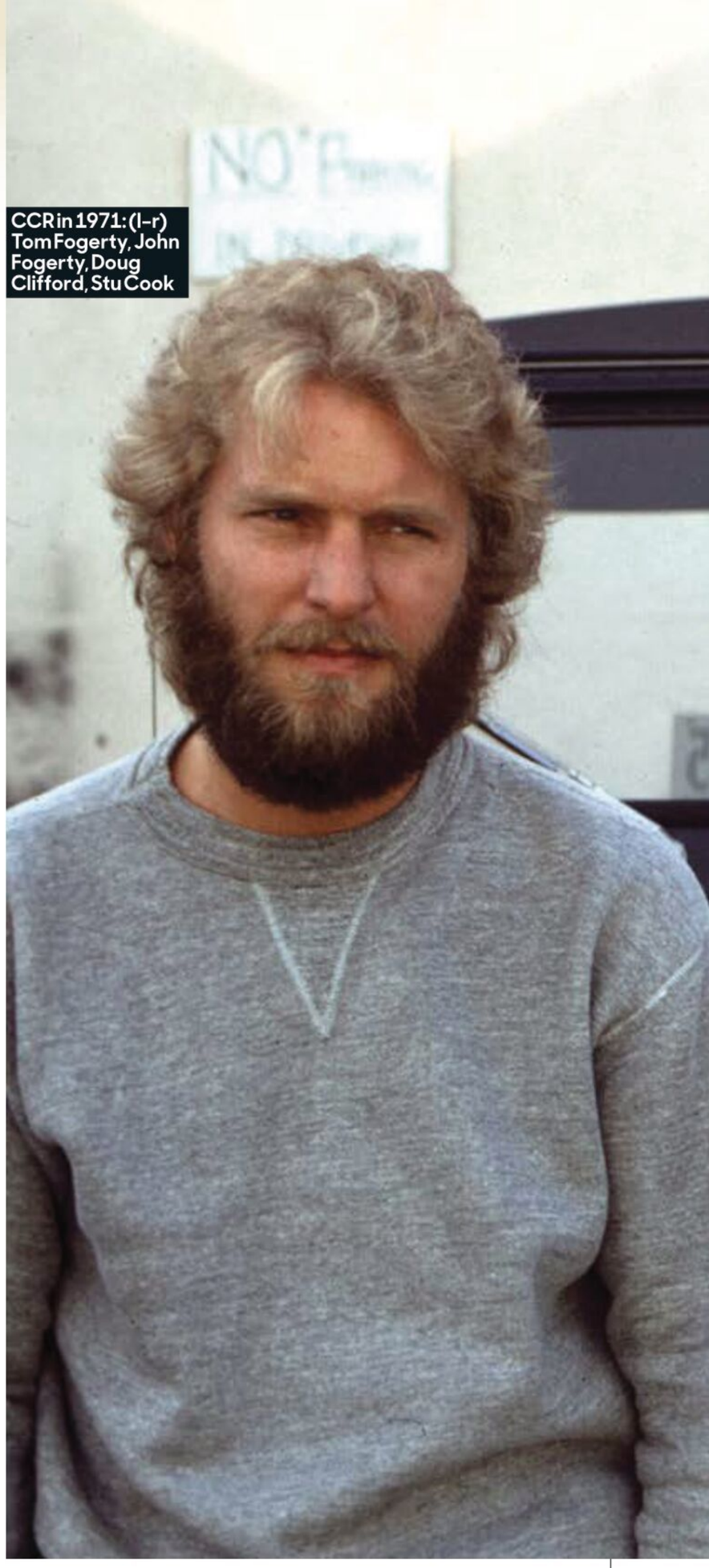
Tom Fogerty

MELODY MAKER 14/08/1971

BERKELEY, California, is a college town with a population of about 100,000 people.

At one time in 1967 Berkeley was said to have more FBI agents doing undercover work there than in the states of Missouri, Indiana and Illinois, which have a total population of about 13 million.

Needless to say Berkeley is a "hot" town; Berkeley is also a musical town; it's the place


CCR in 1971: (l–r) Tom Fogerty, John Fogerty, Doug Clifford, Stu Cook

where Country Joe & The Fish began and where Mother Earth got her roots.

It's the home of Fantasy Records and Creedence Clearwater Revival. Berkeley is also the home and birthplace of one Tom Fogerty, who quit a million-dollar-a-year gig to do his own thing.

I spoke with Tom at Fantasy's new worldwide headquarters in Berkeley, a luxurious building which was more or less, and you can be sure it's more, built from Creedence's earnings.

Tom is very casual and friendly, for a millionaire, and he possesses an unusual energy and power which he can at times convey to others. As rhythm guitar for Creedence he had a future that was everlastingly bountiful yet he gave it all up last February to essentially do whatever he wants. He is a media man with a prophetic nature.

"One of the reasons Creedence pushed themselves so hard and accumulated so much money was because they wanted to clear the way for other artists trying to make it big and, most important, show potential artists what they could do."

But the time passed and Tom realised that he had come as far as he wished to go in his position as rhythm guitarist for Creedence; he was 30 years old with four children and many hard working years behind him.

He hates the thought of being termed a "solo artist" but he undeniably is one with the early success of "Goodbye Media Man", his first solo

single, now heard on radio stations throughout America. His projects for the future include producing blues artist Roger Collins and organist Merle Saunders.

Is your single actually directed at media men?
What I had in mind when I was writing this was mainly television. And not anyone in particular, but just the tube itself. You know how you always sort of get down on the tube, and I was thinking about it because it's just sometimes such a waste of time. And what a neat beautiful tool it is but nobody ever uses it right. It's always just such a piece of crap, such a nothing. Radio is much more communicative than television ever is.

You are a media man. So what you're doing is your feeling of what the media should be.
Well, lot of people are hip to how to use the media. And I mean use it in a bad sense. And so you are told a ton of crap that ain't true, man. There's a lot of misinformation fed into the whatever it is that comes down to you.

Television has a lot to do with the single?
Well, in a sense... it inspired me to write it. Television is such a powerful, powerful tool. The most powerful tool that we have! More than any bomb or anything.

Who influenced you during the '50s when you were young?
When I first started digging music, popular music that I heard on the radio, I was into Eddie Fisher, and Rosemary Clooney, and the Woody Woodpecker song, and stuff like that. That's what I was digging and all of a sudden my older brother turned me on to "Gee" by The Crows.

Who are you jamming with now and what kind of material are you doing?
When I play my stuff I play with just Merle... just me and Merle and the drummer. Because when I play with Jerry Garcia we just play whatever we want. We do stuff like "Mystery Train" and "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean". It's fun. We don't get into a "Well now here's my latest...". I don't want to become that. There are all those stages that I've been through. I wasn't in a group to begin with, I was a singer with a band. And the first records I made were just as a singer. Just about what I'm doing now, except I was called Tommy then instead of Tom.

Who do you like to listen to? What modern artists do you dig?
I love the Stones, man. You know who I really like? Like in the last two days they just blew my mind completely. The Persuasions! They destroyed my head! That's what "Gee" by The Crows was. That's the kind of music it was.
I think The Persuasions should be the number-one band of 1971!

What do you think of the English bands? Have they affected you?
Oh, completely, man. Like here's the way I was seeing it, as an observer of the whole scene. It was like all sort of helter-skelter until Elvis Presley hit. And he made it a thing. You could be one of those. You could be like that. Wow! Yeah! And then The Beatles did the whole thing again for you. And you could say, yeah, I could dig being like that. And Dylan... I wasn't really influenced by Dylan. When I saw the film *Dont Look Back* I finally figured out what was happening with him. That one really did it. I saw it about three times.

Do you think you'll be going to Europe on tour?
Only if I can do it in the way that I heard the Grateful Dead did. They packed up one Friday morning and got in an airplane, and flew to Paris, and played, and stayed a week, and then came home again. It was something like one or two gigs. But it wasn't like work at all. It was a vacation, the way I could dig it.

Why did you leave Creedence?
I guess the best way to explain it is that for some reason we had gotten ourselves in such a place that it was really hard for me to project. Which was stupid! ...But that's what happened. I got tired of hearing my records on the radio. I don't know, there are so many different reasons.

***Pendulum* was the first Creedence album to get heavy publicity and exposure.**

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Fantasy threw a huge party, and the record was heavily advertised yet it sold less than *Cosmo's Factory* and didn't quite live up to the critics' expectations. What was that all about? Mostly what it was all about was sheer exhaustion, and paranoia, and lack of sleep, strange conversations, and weird tensions, personality conflicts and musical differences, and on and on.

How did you guys feel around the time you were recording "Suzie Q"? Did you have any inclination that you would make it? I was feeling then about the way I'm feeling now. It wasn't so much about making it but I felt really excited musically like I was doing something new again. Really moving out and breaking down some walls.

How would you describe the music that you do alone? I call it classical rock.

Are you planning a solo album?
Yes. But I'm not rushing out to do a solo album. Making a single is really what I'm doing, and then I'm doing a single with Merle.

Do you see yourself as a solo artist?
No, not really not like that, no. I contemplated all that sort of trip, you know. Like the ex-Creedence makes it on his own. Will he be able to do it? That's what I just left.

To me it seems that you're basically doing what you please? Yeah, now that's it. And so it appears there's something happening that isn't happening. Like when I play with Jerry and Merle, and Bill, it's because I enjoy playing with them and they enjoy playing with me. I don't see myself as the leader of a band or anything.

You have a line in "Good Bye Media Man", it goes *"You better stop flashing pictures of the people and start flashing pictures of the power".* I got that line at the last Berkeley People's Park anniversary of the riots two years ago – last April, I guess, or was it May? Well anyway, the day that the news was being flashed about it – you know the day after the demonstration, they're flashing the news – and some chick yells off-camera, man. Just like some voice yells off-camera, "You're taking pictures of the wrong thing." Because they were showing how the radicals were running down the street but they weren't showing how the cops were hitting them on the head.

COSMO DONAHUE

Recording in former warehouse turned rehearsal space, 'Cosmo's Factory', Berkeley, 1971

MELODY MAKER 25/09/1971

JOHN FOGERTY, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford, all sat there, smiling, and right as ninepence in the better quality of cowboy shirt. They're a bit clean and you'd let them marry your daughter.

"Rock'n'roll is the closest it's ever come to dying" – John Fogerty said that, in the sharp, short way he delivers things. And after he'd said it, Creedence just came out and said it all, and ate everything that was on the table.

"ROCK'N'ROLL IS THE CLOSEST IT'S EVER COME TO DYING"

John Fogerty

"I'm singing songs I was singing before The Beatles. That way, I just haven't been listening to what followed. I just listen to tapes," continued Fogerty. "I've got that sick of what I hear from the outside. There's just nothing there. Rock music? Phew, you must be joking. It's reached a pathetic level."

Clifford: "It lost its sense of humour. Suddenly people started to put serious words and messages into uptempo drumbeats. One of the basic qualities of rock'n'roll is a sense of humour, and to go right out there and put on a show. People just sit down now and take the best they can get – the only other alternative is to play one of your old songs several times over."

Creedence don't waste words. They all said short things, and then got on with the meal. "People have no control over what they're being served with either," said Fogerty. Clifford came in, mouthing through a monstrous beard. "In the old days it was the bands that pulled the music across people, now it's an industry thing. The industry throws it to the public."

"Yeah, right," says Fogerty. "Musically, it isn't happening, but it's sure happening in industry. And here we are playing rock'n'roll like there ain't nobody."

Cook has been fairly silent, and is eating in a tidy manner. "We have no plans for strings. We won't sophisticate ourselves."

Fogerty: "We refuse to raise ourselves to that level!" That brings a laugh and spluttering from Clifford. Then Cook comes in. "I sure hope rock doesn't slip into the niche that jazz has. But there again, we, Creedence, don't consider music today as being rock'n'roll."

The word technical, and the words "good musician" crop up. And then Fogerty: "The music these bands are playing today would qualify quite highly as being technical music. It sounds

like scales, like hearing somebody doin' scales, collectively. A to E and back to E sharp minor." Cook grins. "Yeah, that's right."

"The centre of rock has been lost," says Fogerty. "It's all bordering stuff now. People tried too many things, the "MacArthur Park"s and "By The Time I Get To Phoenix". Even so-called folk artists like James Taylor are borderers, and very high class, and very... Oh Christ, and the Carole King thing, well, if there's a Hollywood in the '70s, then that's what's happening now."

Everyone agrees that that's a very tasty statement. Which it is. Cook: "Heavy music, right. Well, if that music's good, then you can play it loud or soft. When it's loud, bad music, then people go over to anything, just anything that's soft. So all this soft thing is in, and a lot of people are being listened to who just should not be."

So we get back to the sense of humour. "Vital in life," says Clifford, "and now we're being fed with all this responsibility to this and that through music, and man, that's boring."

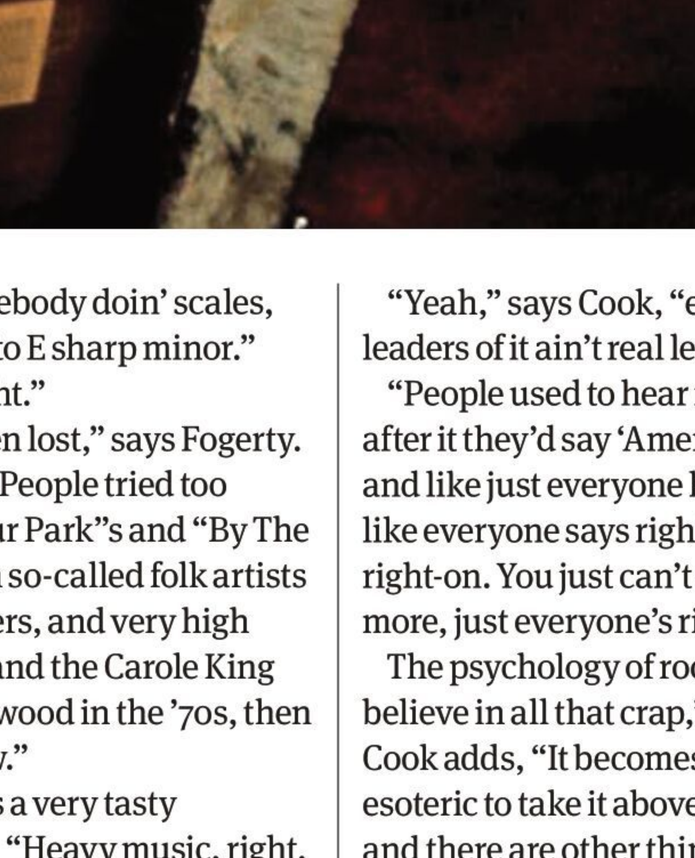
"Yeah," says Cook, "especially when the leaders of it ain't real leaders at all."

"People used to hear music, you know, and like after it they'd say 'Amen'. Now they says right-on, and like just everyone knows all the rhetoric, and like everyone says right-on, and everything's right-on. You just can't say anything new any more, just everyone's right-on, man."

The psychology of rock. "Oh here, I don't believe in all that crap," says Fogerty, and then Cook adds, "It becomes too intellectual, too esoteric to take it above the basic good times, and there are other things in life to appeal to the mighty human mind than rock'n'roll."

Fogerty then reckons that most of the musicians in most of the bands around are better musicians than Creedence. "And so is Segovia," says Cook, "but how many hits has he had recently?"

"They are good musicians, but they can't feel, you can hear that they aren't feeling anything," says Clifford. "I'm just trying to find something I like," adds Cook.



"Well, I like the occasional production job on a record."

Hamburg is still a firm beat citadel, although the days of the Star-Club (still going) are not quite like they used to be. Cook reckons that they used to be a great audience, but they've found that this year's German enjoys his music in a more serious way. He's had his musical education. You know – you sit down, wait till the spider injects the poison and then stay there. Dead.

Tony Joe White blew the cobwebs off stage before Creedence. "Often hard to follow," said someone. He was. Now there's someone playing rock'n'roll, and Christ, you can't understand a single word he says. Just like the old days, someone up there screaming just dirty and evil... and simple.

The hall, large and rather like Victoria or other large stations, buzzes and breaks out into clapping and teutonic cheering. It's very grey, and the night is grey. It's a sort of concrete evening. There's a lot of concrete in Hamburg – maybe they invented it.

Locked Away. That's Creedence tuning up, and getting their line together. They have a line of numbers. "We have a line," said Cook, "it's a strong line, and we can get off it a little. It's not that precise." That's their line.

They blew a magnificent set in Hamburg that night. It wasn't right-on, it was Amen. They were 10 times better than when I saw them in Manchester, they went wild, and Creedence wild is some good experience. Fogerty, for instance, becomes raunchy to the extent of being cruel, and the last 10 minutes was such a bellyful of hot things that an encore would have been physically and mentally impossible.

Fogerty, in his white suit, and dudey boot, and with sweat just dripping, drip... down his face; Clifford whose gaze becomes frightening, and his action often crippling in pace and bleeding with feeling. Can't work out Cook, though, he's so straight with delivery that even the mic stand looks crooked. There is applause, but not wild. An horrific anticlimax in fact. In five minutes the thousands have gone. "Maybe they were taken aback," suggests someone. "I've seen a Creedence audience like that at times."

There's a couple of groupies, all 12 foot of them, looking with menace at anything wearing jeans. Their smiles are sallow. It's the same the whole world over.

"Business. Um," says Cook. "Well, business has been taking over rock'n'roll since it started. Today, right now, well business is the whole damned thing. There's no reason at all why business shouldn't go on, but not the way that it does. Right now everything good that happens to us is written off as being good luck, or how the market was at the time. They don't talk about the music. Business is the main direction."

We hadn't talked about the past. "Things that have gone have gone," says Cook. "We're going well into the future, the three of us."

What of the book *Inside Creedence* which had painted them as being godlike Hollywood stars?

"It wasn't our idea," says Fogerty. "We didn't want it, but somebody did." That's why there's only three members in Creedence now. CR

ROY HOLLINGWORTH

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The three-piece Creedence meet the press at a reception in London as part of their European tour, September 10, 1971

"I HAD THIS IMAGE OF THE PERFECT ROCK'N'ROLL BAND"

John Fogerty explains how he has taught Creedence the language by which they play their roots rock'n'roll. "I learned about the guts, emotion and that really overworked word, the soul in music," he tells *Roy Carr*. A month later, *NME* is again on board as the slimmed-down band lay waste to Europe as a trio, with bold claims to make about the state of the rock business. "It makes me sick," says *Stu Cook*.

CENTRAL PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

NME 11/09/1971

IF there has been one solitary factor which has completely dominated John Fogerty's lifestyle, it has been his insatiable desire to be a successful rock'n'roll star. While most kids of his age were still harbouring adolescent fantasies of becoming railway engine drivers, jet pilots or baseball pitchers, John had crystal-clear visions of himself, guitar in hand, up there on a brightly lit stage belting out some raunchy rock music. The years passed and most of his friends settled for the security of everyday life; John Fogerty, however, realised his ambition.

When retracing his earlier years, John remembers, "When I was young I had this mental image of myself in a rock'n'roll band, me playing guitar with someone like Little Richard, 'cause that's what I wanted to be, a sideman.

"I guess if Eddie Cochran or Buddy Holly were still alive, I probably would have tried to get into their groups or somethin'."

For young Fogerty, the likes of Roy Rogers, Captain Marvel and Joe DiMaggio were very quickly overshadowed by Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis as the focal point of his impressionable hero worship.

Giving a detailed insight as to how his musical personality developed, John states, "I've always had this image in my head of what the traditional rock band was. Sorta like Johnny & The Hurricanes except with singing, and it was sorta like Buddy Holly & The Crickets except a little rougher... Not heavier or riffy, but the kinda stuff that makes you go completely nutty.

"'That'll Be The Day' had it and so did 'Oh Boy', then they'd go soft... It really wasn't rock'n'roll but I kinda liked it."

But despite John's overwhelming determination to succeed, success was very late in coming to him – rock as purveyed by his heroes suddenly slipped from favour to be quickly followed by the shallow images of the Bobby Vees and Fabians. It had to take the British invasion and the aftermath of the American rock revolution to finally expose Fogerty and Creedence Clearwater Revival to the masses.

Miraculously, a whole decade which had witnessed the biggest upheaval in popular music had left Creedence virtually unscathed, to the point where they stood as perhaps the only genuine rock'n'roll band ever to have been instigated by and traversed an entire generation. Creedence, the logical genetic link between the halcyon golden era of the '50s and the confusion of styles that plagued the '70s.

When discussing this pointer, John carefully sidestepped the word "logical" by saying, "I really don't know about logical, but I do feel like an extension", then with a laugh adding, "I guess you could say that Creedence are kinda misplaced in today's environment."

Returning to his formative years as an unknown struggling rock musician, John again dwells on images. "Though I pictured myself playing alongside of all the great rock stars, I was far too young to put it into practice.

"However, even then I had confidence in my own resources, and to this day it has never been shaken." Accentuating this bold statement with yet another laugh – because John Fogerty likes to laugh a lot – he confesses, "I'm a cocky enough individual and I've always believed that somewhere or other I'd always be in there, but I didn't know under what guise.

"You see, at first, I didn't know how well I could transmit my knowledge or my faith in the whole thing to the other guys. The big struggle was getting everyone to believe in it and to believe in himself, because each one of us had our own basic insecurities about our own abilities.

"None of us ran around thinking that we were anything too hot and we had to overcome that. But together we knew we could make up a pretty good group." However, they weren't about to realise that feeling for another five years.

"As a band, we started at the tail end of the rock era. The band never sat down and learned things religiously; in fact we never really sat down and had each other learning on his own until around the time of our first hit, 'Suzie Q', then it really started to sink in.

"If I did have a moment of doubt it was around this time. It was like this – I had been a little unsure of things until 'Proud Mary' happened and the album *Bayou Country* was accepted.

"The hardest thing was knowing that after our first hit single 'Suzie Q' we could become has-beens in just 30 days. For our second single hadn't been as big as our first one, and that is the most critical time in anyone's career.

"Up until then everyone had been psychedelic, and honestly we just didn't know what would happen. Before that I'd show 'em a song, an arrangement, that sorta thing, and I guess that tended to tie their hands, 'cause they figured John is going to show me so I don't have to listen or something like that. So it couldn't come out.

"In other words, we couldn't just say, there's a song on the radio and Doug would come in and already know the drum part... It just didn't work out that way.

"I suppose it would have made it much quicker in that we would have all had the same language, but we did it the other way. My language – and we could all speak it, which I suppose was one way of doing it."

Casting his memory even further back down the time tunnel, John readily admits that the band wasn't about to set the music world on fire.

"But first of all you gotta understand the standards that I have – hardly we or anyone else for that matter measures up to them.

"Well, we didn't have a bass then... it was very shrill music. It was all geared around volume and the highest octave, like I put every song in the highest octave that I could possibly sing because we didn't have a microphone either.

"Anyhow, it evolved into a very shrill thing. It was like a bad fidelity record... piano, guitar and drums. There was no bottom to it at all except what you could get out of the piano.

"But returning to the standards I set myself, again it's like that image thing we were discussing earlier, in that you make up in your mind what would make up the perfect rock'n'roll band and then try to live up to that imagery.

"Ever since I started to get interested in rock music I always felt that I understood it real well. You see, I found out right away that I knew exactly why somebody did something. Like on the first hearing of a record what should happen further on in the song. Everyone makes the decision... 'I like this song, don't I', but I began to see why and what the reasons were.

"Sometimes a song would come on the radio with a super guitar intro, then it would go into a Four Preps kinda harmony and completely destroy the whole thing, and I began to see why it should have followed it with this, that or the other.

"In those early days I learned about the guts, emotion and that really overworked word, the soul in music, the inside, the entire core of rock'n'roll in the '50s. In fact, I find it very hard to believe in anyone who started listening after '61. I mean could they really understand what it is if they hadn't heard that music first-hand?

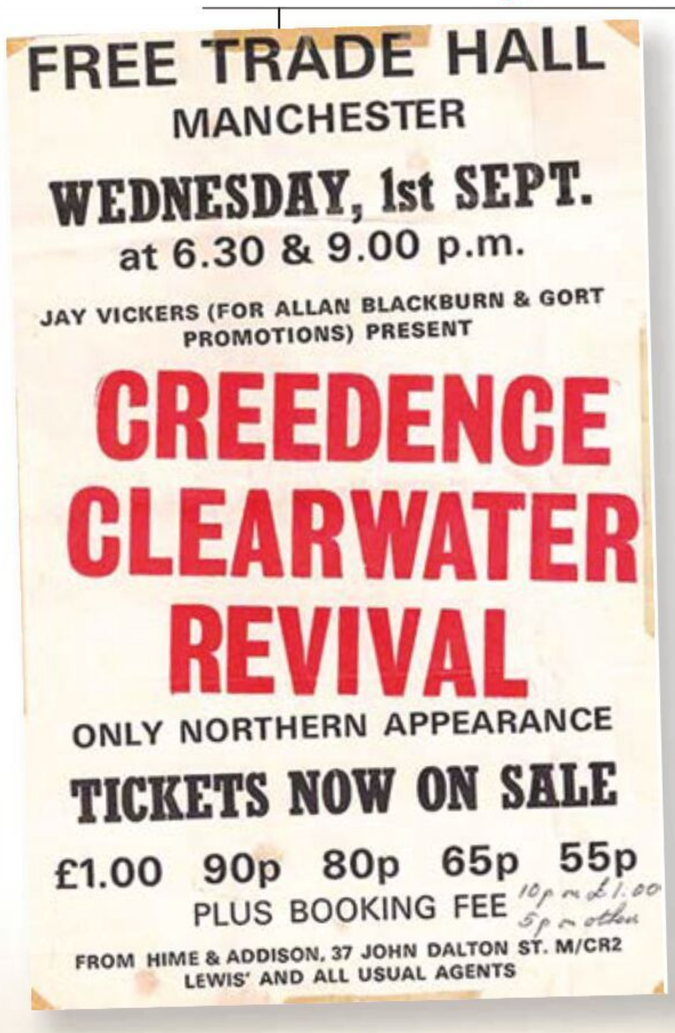
"They most certainly couldn't transmit that feeling to anyone else, at least you'd have to go back and listen to 'Great Balls Of Fire' or 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On' over and over like you did on the radio or when you first bought the record."

There's no denying the fact, John Fogerty, Stu Cook and Doug Clifford are the complete personification of all that's good in rock music, and though they have succeeded in formulating their own highly distinctive version based on the traditions that they have absorbed, each one of them is constantly aware of his predecessors.

John gave a good example of this as he began to discuss his own guitar-playing. "When I do an obvious lick I know where it came from, for I have most of them catalogued in my mind. That way I

"AT FIRST, THE BIG STRUGGLE WAS GETTING EVERYONE TO BELIEVE IN IT"

John Fogerty



Fogerty, Cook and "Cosmo" in Manchester ahead of their concert at the Free Trade Hall on September 1, 1971

don't use them in our songs so that they stand out when I do decide to include one in a solo.

"I'm aware that the influences are there all the time, but once in a while when we are extending something I'll think yeah, and I'll play a little Scotty Moore – it'll be obvious – and if you know Scotty Moore you'll hear it.

"I'll do it note for note exactly the way that he did it, then I'll start changing it around... You know Scotty Moore invented some incredible licks; it's just the same with James Burton.

"The thing Buddy Holly did in 'That'll Be The Day'," which then prompted John to sing the guitar line while working out the appropriate fingering on an imaginary fretboard, "why change that? Why make it something different. But you'd know it right away and where it came from if I started doing it and I would too... That's the whole point.

"I did one last night, when I turned round and yelled at you," John admitted, referring to the previous evening's concert in Manchester. "It wasn't by anyone particular, just a standard rock'n'roll guitar lick."

Not so long ago, rumours were circulating, as rumours often do, that Little Richard was teaming up with Creedence Clearwater Revival to cut an album.

Of all similar combinations attempted, it appeared that on paper it seemed the most likely to yield fruition. Clarifying the truth behind these rumours, John began: "It wasn't just us... Actually I think it was a project that Little Richard was thinking about.

"We never actually talked to him, but we did meet his manager a couple of times. What I think Little Richard had in mind was doing a collection of all the rock'n'roll people by having them guest on his album.

"I must confess that it sounded pretty good, but there was this unsure thing of who were the other people and would any of them accept it."

John then revealed that in fact Creedence hadn't played alongside many of the all-time rock giants; the truth is that they only started to meet them after, as John puts it, "our own star rose a little".

IT was only a matter of time before our lengthy conversation got around to the one person responsible for the entire evolution of the rock culture... Elvis Presley. When I asked John for his candid opinion of what Presley was doing today, his immediate reply was: "I wish he would stop. I've said this before, but he's the only one of all those original guys who crossed over – people like Jerry Lee are still doing what they always did – Presley went legit. In the back of your mind you know that any time he wanted to, Elvis could make THAT record and, boom, it could happen all over again.

"You could say that Elvis has the perfect rock'n'roll voice. He's superb on ballads and I don't think anyone could top him except maybe Merle Haggard. Elvis kinda invented that whole ballad rock'n'roll style.

"Again returning to this question of imagery, it's always been there and that was the difference between Presley and Carl Perkins. I was just thinking the other day, when the British thing happened in the States, anyone whose grandfather was from England was making it. It was kinda like that during the early Elvis thing – if you played guitar and sang, a little bit of Elvis rubbed off on you.

"The idea of Carl Perkins getting screams was kinda weird – Johnny Cash doing 'Ballad Of A Teenage Queen' and people leaping around and screamin' for it – Stonewall Jackson doing 'Waterloo' and getting grabbed for it on *The Dick Clark Show*... But it was all a carry-over from Presley and people subconsciously identified with it.

"Part of what I'm wearing now," pointing to his newly acquired western garb, "is because we

MIKERANDOLPH/PAUL POPPER/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

made a studied uniform out of denims and plaid shirts, and it got to where everyone in the Fillmore audience was wearing the same thing as everyone on stage. It gradually reached the point where you couldn't tell who was what.

"This was kinda important for a while. The reason I did it from 1967 was I wanted them to listen to the music and not get them all knocked out about so-and-so's new sequinned jacket.

"We got past that stage and then when you looked out into the audience and realised everyone was wearing the same as you, a little change was then needed."

As the visual image of Creedence has altered slightly so has the lineup, which now comprises the basic lineup of guitar, bass and drums. Though this may be the case on live gigs, Creedence's last two albums, *Cosmo's Factory* and *Pendulum*, have revealed a broadening of their sound, with John supplementing their guitar sound with keyboards and an entire sax section through the miracle of overdubbing.

When I asked John had he ever considered strengthening the band for live gigs he gave an insight of what could happen.

"I've always felt that way from the very beginning. Remember, I had this image of the perfect rock'n'roll band, and to me that should be three saxes, two guitars capable of playing lead but only one of them at a time, organ, bass, drums and maybe a conga drummer.

"It would comprise the whole works, but it would be rock'n'roll, not jazz or jazz-rock or any of that crap. If I ever decided to do that, I wouldn't do it in the current super-session syndrome with famous guest stars, because it puts too much pressure on everyone concerned.

"I would choose musicians strictly on their ability – not an all-star team, but the best team."

NME 9/10/1971

WITH silk wing pennants fluttering in the afternoon breeze, the sleek dark-green Russian Army staff car full of Soviet high-ranking officials pulled silently away from the heavily fortified Brandenburg Gate in the Eastern sector of Berlin with a brace of brightly coloured stickers affixed on either side of the car's gold-leafed Red Star emblem boldly proclaiming: "Creedence Clearwater Revival On Tour".

Gort, CCR's mythical mascot and famed star of the film *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, had struck again. During our short expedition into drab East Berlin, nothing escaped the very mischievous hand of Gort – the solemn Brandenburg Gate itself, a convoy of Soviet military wagons, even the stark passport control hut at the infamous Checkpoint Charlie were indelibly stamped.

Even the most novice Boy Scout would have encountered little difficulty in tracking down Creedence across Europe by this trail of stickers which somehow found their way onto the nosecones of jet airliners, the backs of air stewardesses, innumerable national monuments.

These were just a few of the many harmless pranks which highlighted the second European tour by Creedence Clearwater Revival, who are at this very moment recuperating on Maui, that tropical paradise in the Hawaiian Islands. And it's well-earned rest at that, for this tour was the third leg of an extensive and lengthy period of concerts which had incorporated two coast-to-coast jaunts of the United States.

Liggin' around Europe and Scandinavia for three solid weeks in a private eight-seater Lear let (Mondo Bizarre 3) with America's top travellin' band, staying in luxury hotels, continually hitting each successive city's nightspots must, I'm quite sure, immediately conjure up outrageous visions of the glitter and tinsel of La Dolce Vita.

Don't kid yourselves – by no stretch of the imagination is it all chicks and champers. However, without knocking it, I must emphatically state that the prime requisites for undertaking such an ordeal are the constitution of a wild ox, a stainless-steel liver and a good sense of humour.

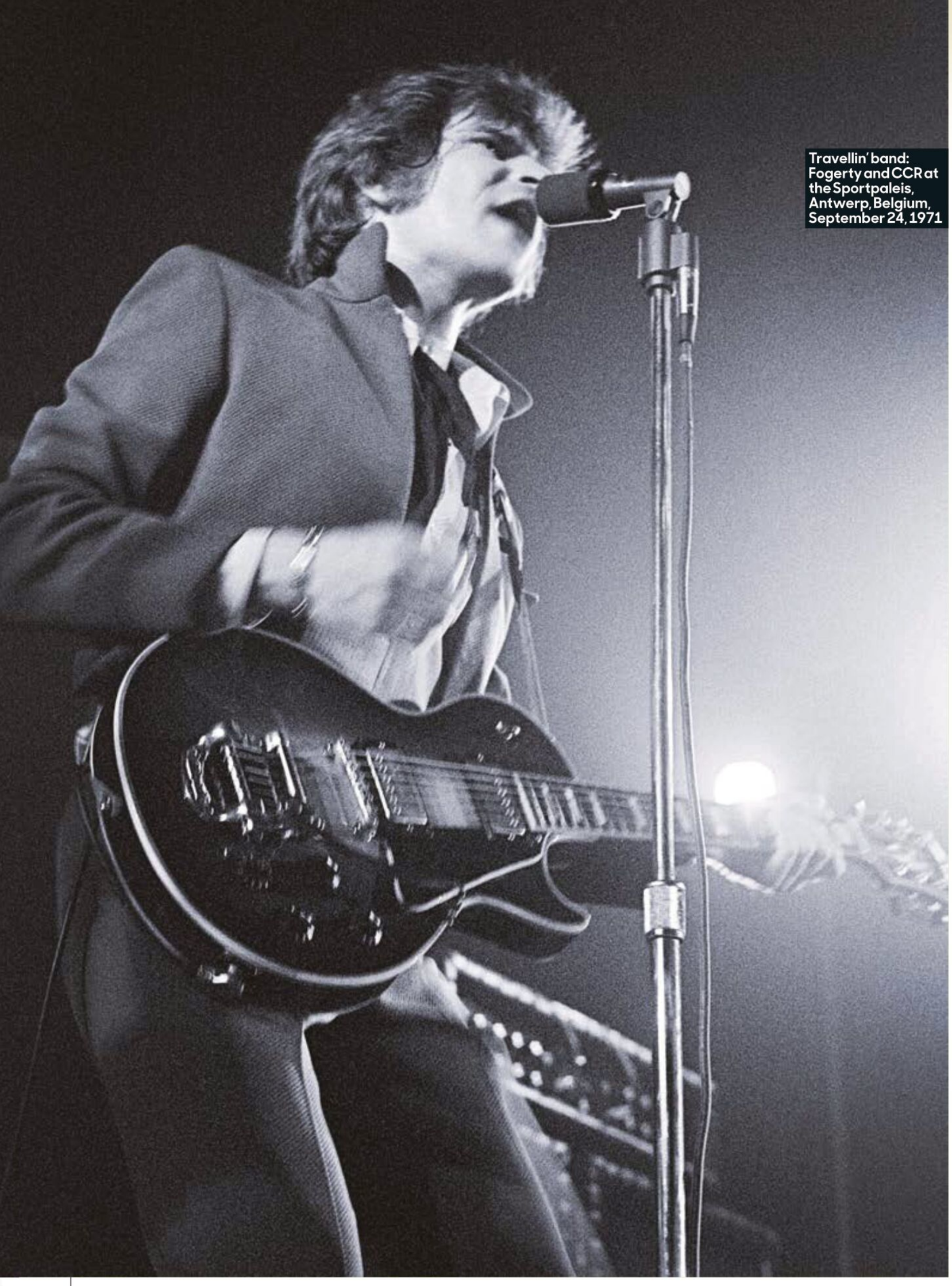
By the time we all stumbled somewhat ashen faced and red eyed into Stockholm's Arlanda Airport towards the tail-end of our odyssey, we all had, as Tony Joe White so accurately put it, that all too familiar "on the road" look – rock'n'roll battle fatigue.

There were the accumulated results of several things. Insufficient sleep, a continual change of diet (that's when you could get the waiters to serve you), acute bouts of strength-sapping "road-runners", uninhibited looning, getting

No fan of glad-handing record label types: Stu Cook in Antwerp

Doug Clifford in Antwerp: defying doctor's orders to keep playing

GIEKNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES



Travellin' band: Fogerty and CCR at the Sportpaleis, Antwerp, Belgium, September 24, 1971

ozoned. And sheer physical abuse.

Perhaps the only important person missing from Creedence's mammoth entourage was a personal physician, for without exception his services were required on numerous occasions.

In fact, Creedence's opening concerts at the majestic Concertgebouw in picturesque Amsterdam together with the remainder of the entire tour were put in jeopardy when it was discovered that drummer Doug "Cosmo" Clifford had contracted a rare strain of Scarlet Fever.

With both concerts having been completely sold out for well over two weeks in advance, Cosmo disobeyed a local doctor's orders, went on stage and played his heart out, before collapsing in the sanctuary of the dressing rooms, totally exhausted, soaking wet and at least seven pounds lighter.

Relating to the hazards of such afflictions, Stu Cook says, "On the road there's no place to make you feel well other than your very own home. If you're sick on the road then it's just a drag and there's nothing you can do about it."

By no means newcomers to this highly competitive and cut-throat business, they have been in existence for well over decade. Creedence are forever utilising their invaluable experience to their advantage. Therefore, for the furtherment of their career, this tour was of three-fold importance.

"REALLY, THEY ARE JUST THE WRONG PEOPLE TO BE HANDLING OUR RECORDS"

Stu Cook

First, to consolidate their ever-increasing popularity on all fronts. Secondly to cut a "live" album for an end-of-the-year release, and thirdly to investigate those companies responsible for handling their records in various foreign markets.

If on the first two counts things proved to be most successful, Creedence openly voiced their displeasure as to the inefficiency of certain companies in respect to the rather lackadaisical methods of marketing and promotion.

When I enquired as to what aspects of the business met with their disapproval, I was duly informed, "The business." Pulling absolutely no punches in his condemnation, Stu was quite adamant when he stated, "It make me sick to see all these people running around shaking each other's hands, patting us on the back and talking as though it's one team, when in fact all they do is distribute the product, as they insist on calling it. And they don't do a very good job at that.

"I'm totally sick of the record business, I really am. The only record company that I've ever seen worth anything is the one in Germany, and that's Bellaphon." Having seen for myself the Teutonic efficiency with which they go about promoting Creedence, I have to agree with Cook's statement, Bellaphon are an object lesson to other companies in one art of 'digitus extractus'.

It's no closely guarded secret that there is little love lost between Creedence and Fantasy, their American label. If given his head, Cook frankly admits that he would immediately dispense with the services of those people who control their recorded output.

The prime motivation for this drastic train of thought is: "Really, they are just the wrong people to be handling our records. They don't have any enthusiasm and it's not our job to run around building fires under all these people. But the truth is that nobody else will do it."

What is the alternative?

"When our existing contract runs out in two years' time we'll start all over again, but this time it'll be our way and with our very own label. In that way we can get a really good team working with and for us."

It's a familiar story that I've heard from other major groups totally disillusioned with the continuous wheelings and dealing of the industry – The Beach Boys, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones. Cook is determined to learn from the mistakes of others.

"The Rolling Stones just blew their chance to do it," was his observation. "OK, they got a lot of money from Atlantic, and promotion, but they really don't have their own label."

With regard to Creedence, his definition of the group is, "We're not showbusiness people. We just happen to be musicians who enjoy playing and the two just happen to go together."

Though by virtue of their artistry and magnetism, Creedence command one's full attention in concert, offstage limelight isn't their favourite colour. As musicians they are content to just relax and jam with their friends.

It's a sad fact that some of the finest music laid down on this tour was never captured for posterity on tape. Impromptu jams were soon to become a regular occurrence, with just a few close friends and casual onlookers in attendance – these moments being confined to either hotel rooms or small private after-hours niteries.

Two such soirees remain as crystal-clear recollections. The first took place before an invited audience of Pan Am captains and their beautiful crew on the sixth floor of the plush Intercontinental Hotel in Frankfurt. John Fogerty plugged in his recently acquired steel guitar to be joined by the Memphis yo-yo master Duck ➤

"There's a lot more energy in our playing": CCR return to the Albert Hall, London, September 27, 1971

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Dunn on bass, Stu Cook, who had shifted to guitar, and the now fully recovered Cosmo at the drums for some funky, down-home workouts of such Creedence standards as "Up Around The Bend," "Lodi," and "Sweet Hitch-Hiker". Also given the band's distinctive treatment were Booker T's "Time Is Tight" and that old warhorse "Knock On Wood".

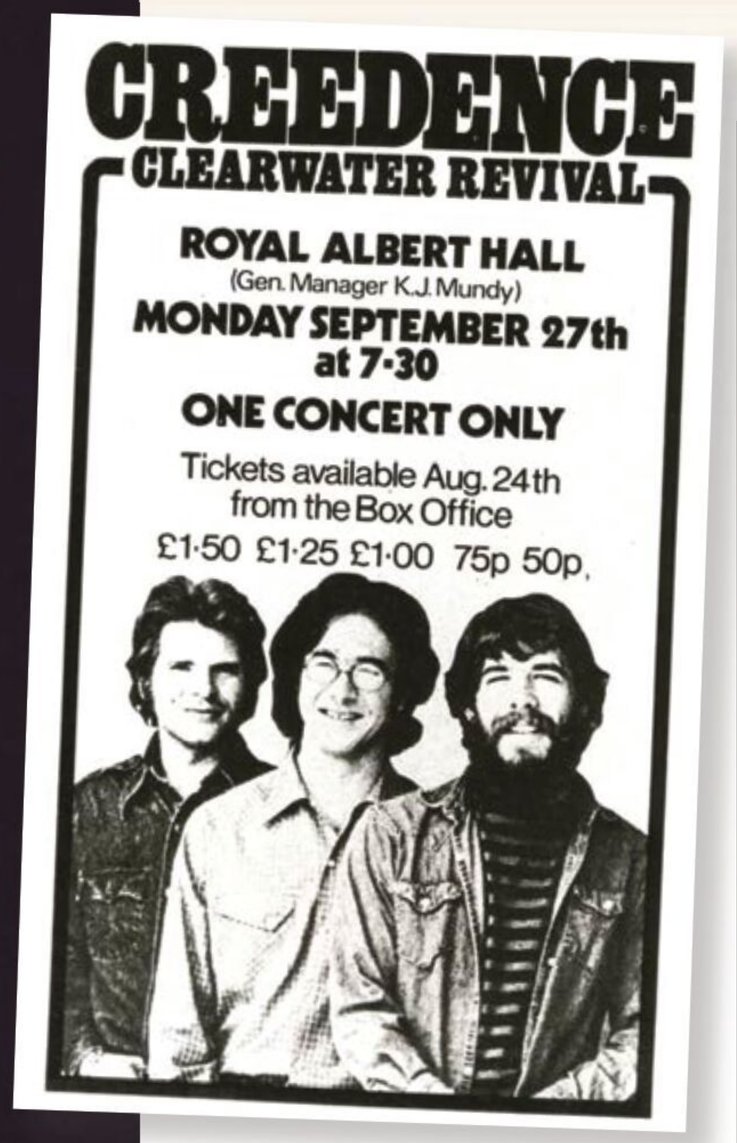
Just eight weeks into learning the complex mechanics of the steel guitar, Fogerty amazed everyone present with his dexterity and command. However, the excellence of the music didn't meet with the approval of everyone within earshot. Like the Demon King in panto, the hotel manager suddenly appeared in the doorway to reiterate the complaints lodged by the guests in the suite above.

Though everything was done to try and appease their displeasure, we were informed on the stroke of 4am that we had a choice – terminate or vacate there and then.

"Well I can pack my bags and be ready to move out in a couple of minutes," Stu joked as he looked up from his guitar fretboard, and for a moment it appeared as though a mass exodus would be the order.

After deliberating the matter, the realisation that at such a late hour there wouldn't be any suitable establishment to reconvene, the power was switched off, instruments packed away and somewhat despondently we all trundled off to our respective rooms.

The next such get-together took place at the Badawadden Club in the divided city of Berlin. This time the personnel on stage comprised John Fogerty and Tony Joe White (guitars and vocals), recording engineer Russ Gary on rhythm, with Duck and Cosmo filling in their respective roles. With the Creedence circus at this late hour outnumbering the patrons, the music rocked hard and heavy, with John and Tony Joe White trading vocal choruses and wailing guitar licks.



By the time we hit Copenhagen, it was obvious from the excellence of the concerts in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Berlin and Hamburg that there was a veritable wealth of in-person recordings safely in the can.

Last year, Creedence fell hopelessly in love with the beautiful city of Copenhagen, and so a lengthy stopover In "Whoopee Town" was instigated. You just can't help but be a willing tourist in Copenhagen, and to this end the Tivoli Gardens became our destination on two consecutive evenings. The purpose was to witness the truly breathtaking giant firework display... a really mind-ripping experience.

Being left to our own devices we split up into small parties to explore Copenhagen's vast network of entertainment. Comparing notes later the next day, it appears that virtually every club in town had been invaded by our large entourage.

For the most part, Continental press conferences usually resemble a comedy of errors. Not being people to suffer fools gladly, Creedence and their amiable press representatives Jake Rohrer try their utmost to make things run smoothly and give articulate replies to some of the most mundane questions imaginable.

If Creedence have a great respect for the British musical press, they are not so flattering about our Continental counterparts. "Most writers have some kind of chip on their shoulder and just want to argue with you," Stu admitted with a degree of puzzlement.

"All they seem to want to do is tell you that rock has changed and what is Creedence doing out there playing that shit. They'll say here's where rock is now, and we'll say, but wait a minute, that's where that is but that ain't rock'n'roll.' OK, I can't argue with them, for if they like it, well then that's great, but that ain't what's happening. It's the attitudes of many writers that really bugs me."

You can't imagine the frustration of having the same stupid question fired at you in rapid succession by three different ill-informed local finger-poppin' groovers while trying to extract a telephoto lens from one's nostril.

Having sat in on such confrontations, I have to report that in most countries writers are more concerned with drugs and politics than the actual music.

When the conversation does touch on the subject of music they are for the most part at a loss – their knowledge, attitudes and discretion could only be explored by means of a high-powered microscope.

Not being a person to mince words, Stu began. "The trouble is that most of them don't realise that music is so screwed up. It's got no balls, no guts, not a single thing stands above anything else.

"It's become Muzak. People don't know what really good music sounds like nowadays. Music now is just as bad as it was before The Beatles came along. Right now the Bobby Vees and the Bobby Shermans are bigger than they ever were, only now they're called The Jackson Five and The Osmond Brothers.

"OK, so you keep on saying go listen to Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino and Little Richard, but you gotta listen and understand why those records turned so many people on the way they did.

"You can't listen to Eric Clapton and figure out what he learned from some blues guys, you've got to listen to the original." To which Cosmo added: "Most of the stuff released today is well played, well produced, but there's no feeling to it."

Now getting quite excited with the direction in which this conversation was moving, Stu's opinion was that music, rock music, has become neutered. "It doesn't want to make you leap about or pound your fist on the table. You'll listen to a record and say 'That's nice' and nothing else.

"The Rolling Stones are one of the few bands who still has the right kinda spirit. I'm not trying to do a promo for the Stones, but 'Brown Sugar' has been the only good record in ages.

"IN THE PAST IT DIDN'T LOOK AS THOUGH ANYTHING WE WROTE WOULD GET ON RECORD"

Stu Cook

"You can add Dave Edmunds' 'I Hear Your Knockin'' and Ashton, Gardner & Dyke's 'Resurrection Shuffle', they were both excellent records. I don't know whose hiding out in the woodshed, but goddam they better be good and they better be quick about it."

As a verbal postscript, Stu concluded, "I'm not saying for one moment that you've got to be an intellectual to dig rock'n'roll, but neither do you have to be an intellectual to know when something is bad. It's phenomenal the shit that's in the charts – it doesn't piss me off that it sells a lot of records, but only that so many people think that it's good."

Three years of non-stop boogie has resulted in Creedence Clearwater Revival accounting for 100 million dollars in worldwide record sales and replacing The Beatles on the international best-selling charts. Then, at a time when they could guarantee box-office returns of 90,000 dollars for a one-nighter Stateside, they came off the road.

During this self-imposed seven-month lay-off, Tom Fogerty departed from their ranks and a change in musical policy is now about to make itself evident.

There are many reasons for the internal upheavals, but they are now history except to say that from now on both Cook and Clifford will have more say as to the directions both musical and business-wise in which Creedence will move. This wasn't so much a power struggle, but the need for more individual expression by the other members of the group to contribute to Creedence's brand of rock'n'roll.

Conversing on this important stage in Creedence's development, Stu says, "We're all having more fun and there's a lot more energy in our playing. In the past it didn't look as though anything we ever wrote would ever get on record. You see there wasn't any incentive for us to go up in the attic and write great hit songs which would only be for yourself."

Any new non-Fogerty songs to emerge will, for the most part, be as a result of the collaboration of ideas between Cook and Clifford. "Stu and I are going to get together to write songs," Cosmo confessed.

"We are writing because we want to and nothing else. Probably I will draw from Stu's music, his melodies and chord structures, and in this way I can work out various rhythms and perhaps contribute to the lyrics. Right now I'm limited in what I can do and the only way I can get better is to work alongside of Stu."

At this point both Cook and Clifford emphasised that they weren't about to become prolific music machines. "I've written a whole lotta things," Stu informed me, "but there's only about two along with 'Door To Door' (the flip of "Sweet Hitch-Hiker") which I would ever consider recording." Then almost in unison they admitted that they weren't too bothered about the quantity of their output, only the quality.

AFTERTHOUGHT: When you live, eat, sleep, confide and get ripped out of your head with a bunch of people over the period which this tour encompassed, a lasting bond is forged.

When those around you lose their heads, it is gratifying to see that people like John, Doug and Stu still retain their mental equilibrium, keeping their priorities in a true sense of perspective.

Creedence Clearwater Revival may personify the great American Rock'n'roll Dream, but when the house lights are down, the instruments wiped clean and packed away, they are still first and foremost the same boys who were stuck in Lodi, a long time ago. CR

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Released: APRIL 11, 1972

MARDI GRAS

Too many Cooks (and Cliffords) marr an abrasive and underwhelming Creedence swansong, for which few hold parades.

By Terry Staunton

THE release of the single "Sweet Hitch-Hiker" in July 1971 suggested business as usual for Creedence following the departure of Tom Fogerty; a riff-fuelled rocker as insistent and catchy as any of the group's previous forays towards the top of the charts. It proved, however, to be something of a placeholder until the reduced-ranks threesome brought an entire album to market, by which time there had been an awkward shift in power.

Mardi Gras was made under an uncomfortable democracy, the younger Fogerty John no longer the chief creative dynamo and contributing just three self-penned tracks, with bassist Stu Cook and/or drummer Doug Clifford responsible for another six. It was a redistribution of labour that came too late for the older brother, who'd jumped ship precisely because he hadn't had much to do.

"Creedence was together for nine years before we made it big, and 60 per cent of that time I was the lead singer," Tom told *Rolling Stone* in 1982. "I wasn't a dictator, but I was more of a leader than just the guy who stood there and played rhythm guitar. After we were into our sixth platinum album I just thought maybe I could do a little singing, but John wasn't going to change things, so I split."

But change John did, although not without a fight, believing the path he'd charted to establish the group as multi-platinum megastars was the right one, and it would be foolish to mess with a winning formula.

"I held my ground for as long as I could, then basically there was a mutiny," he said in 2013. "They [*Cook and Clifford*] laid out all their demands and the only way forward was to do what these guys wanted. The reason I held out for so long was that I was pretty sure it wasn't going to be very good. I thought, 'Let's not do that, don't change the flavour of Coke, it's not a good plan.'

"I gave in mostly from being worn down, but I also did it thinking, 'This is what I gotta do to keep the band going.'"

Although John belatedly relented to allow his bandmates a larger input into the writing and recording of the new album it was not without caveats. He told Cook and Clifford he would only contribute rhythm guitar to their songs and refused outright to add his growl (a long-standing CCR hallmark) to any of their backing vocals.

To all intents and purposes, that proviso stripped more than half of the songs on *Mardi Gras* of a tangible Creedence identity, so it was no surprise when another of Fogerty's compositions was chosen for the next single release. "Someday Never Comes" was initially inspired by his parents' divorce when he was a child, but it's ➤

John told Cook and Clifford he would only contribute rhythm guitar to their songs

CBW / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Man down: Clifford, Fogerty and Cook at a press conference, February 1972

tempting to also interpret it as a signpost to the band's demise.

Fogerty admitted as much in the liner notes for his solo album *Wrote A Song For Everyone* more than 40 years later. "When I wrote ["*Someday...*"] my life was pretty chaotic. I knew my marriage was going to break up. My band was falling apart. I was beginning to sense the darkness."

With that in mind, the stateliness and introspective tone of Fogerty's ode to inevitability might have been more wisely sequenced as the album's final track, rather than where it appears at the end of Side One. As it is, it has the tendency to render most of Side Two an underwhelming coda to a once great band.

Mardi Gras does kick off promisingly, though, with Fogerty's only non-single writing credit, "Lookin' For A Reason". A mid-tempo strummer, the band forsake their trademark "chooglin'" for a rhythm that recalls the Bakersfield sound of Buck Owens, with John's occasional yodel doffing a hat to other country gents like Lefty Frizzell or Webb Pierce.

It's still recognisably Creedence, and the first real indication the listener has landed in unfamiliar terrain comes when Cook steps up to the mic for "Take It Like A Friend". Its staccato Southern boogie with an undertow of white-boy funk largely fails to convince, while the bassist overdubbing a lead guitar break himself results in a lack of the spontaneity associated with the band in their hitherto seamless groove.

Vocal-wise, where Fogerty growls and weaves his way into the arrangements, Cook delivers more of an unsubtle bark, spitting out the words as if they'd left a nasty taste in his mouth. He's much more palatable on the jaunty "Door To Door" (previewed on the flip side of the previous year's "Sweet Hitch-Hiker" single), the barrelhouse blues a not-too-distant cousin of Canned Heat, embellished with a solo that suggests Chuck Berry is never far from his turntable at home.

It's perhaps unfortunate for the man himself that Cook's strongest contribution to the album, "Sail Away", borrows heavily, nay wholesale from Fogerty high-water marks of yore. Listening to the song's rich acoustic backbone and reflective lyric it's almost impossible not to think of "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?" or "Lodi", to the point where you're checking the sleeve to make sure it's not a previously unused element of an already lauded suite.

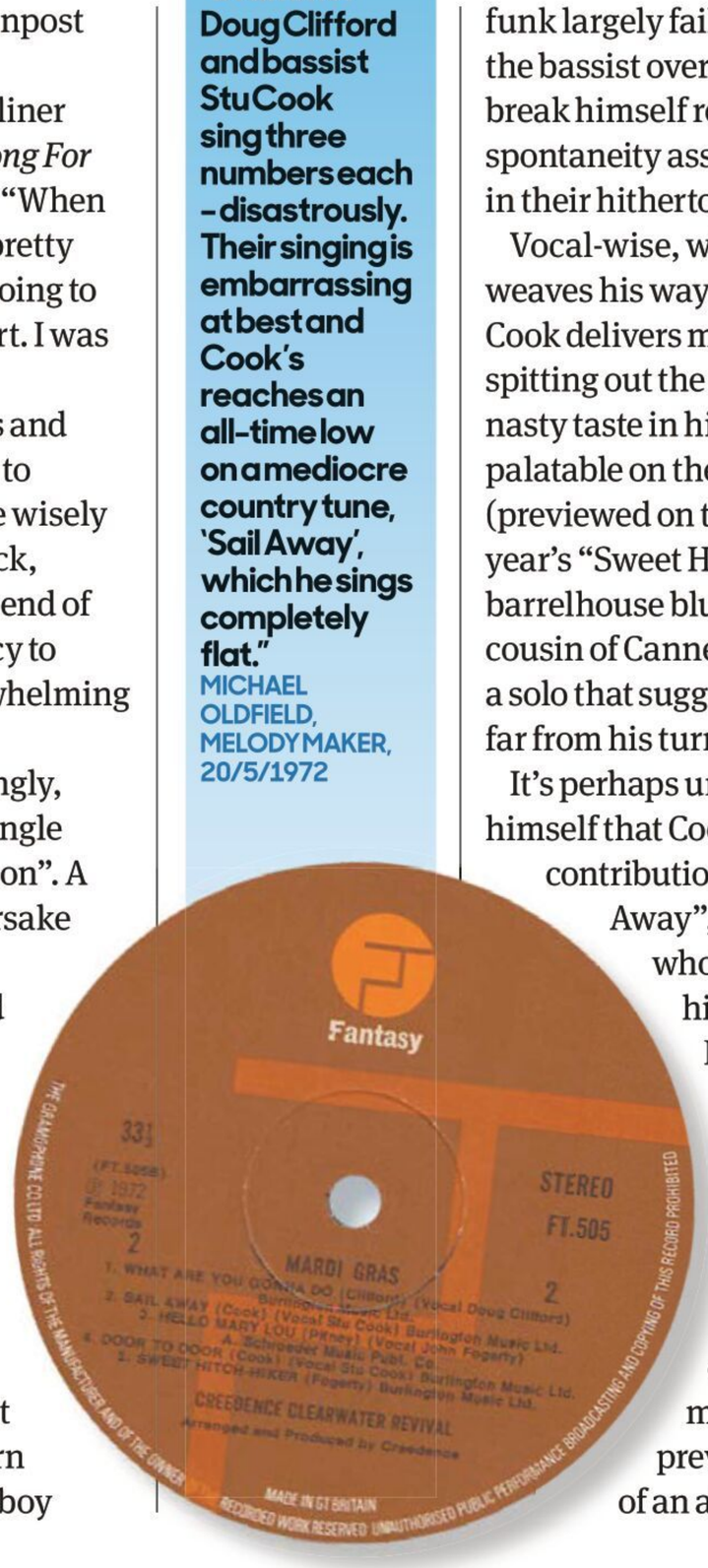
Cook shares a writing credit with Clifford on "Need Someone To Hold", and there's noticeably less gravel in the drummer's attractively weather-beaten lead vocal; a casual, almost conversational delivery, riding shotgun with understated vamping piano. Creedence may have sung about being born on the bayou, but here the trio seem at home in the rustic backwoods often inhabited by The Band.

If the bassist's contributions seem more closely tethered to archetypal Creedence, even when they're trying to break free, Clifford's appear more relaxed and pragmatically geared towards mapping out different ground. The band were no strangers to rockabilly on earlier albums, but "Tearin' Up The Country" diverts the hillbilly shuffle towards the trucker country of, say, Dave Dudley, or even the Flying Burrito Brothers.

There's less to admire on Clifford's other self-penned number. "What Are You Gonna Do?" stutters along for two-and-a-half minutes like a rehearsal jam with no discernible compass before fading out of view to be forgotten almost immediately. More robust material can be found on *Cosmo's*, the solo album he released later in '72, where solidly crafted country-tinged originals share space with covers of The Lovin' Spoonful and Spencer Davis Group.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Drummer Doug Clifford and bassist Stu Cook sing three numbers each – disastrously. Their singing is embarrassing at best and Cook's reaches an all-time low on a mediocre country tune, 'Sail Away', which he sings completely flat."
MICHAEL OLDFIELD, MELODY MAKER, 20/5/1972



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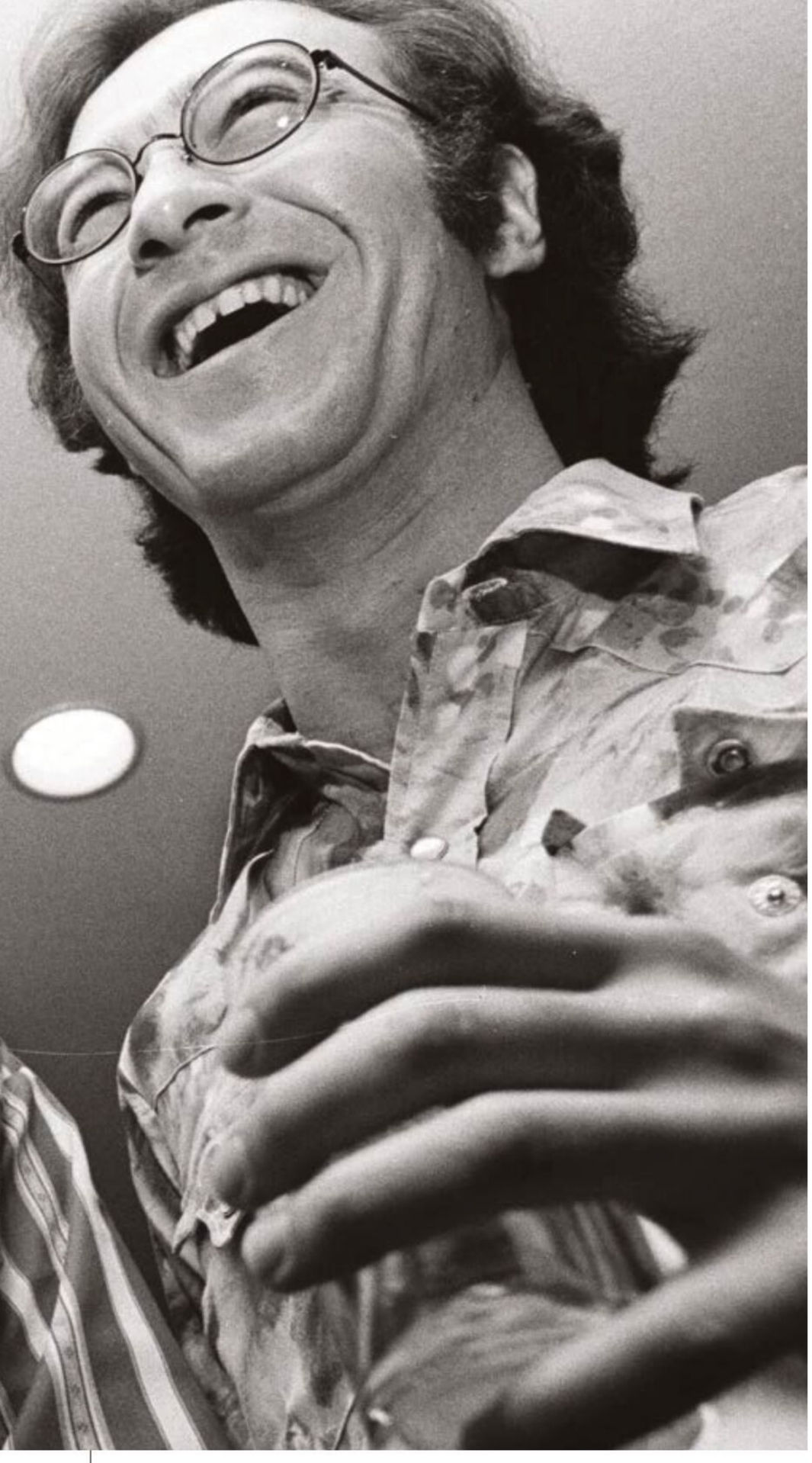


It feels like a record made according to the letter of collaboration rather than its spirit

EARLIER in Creedence's career, a cover version knocked off in a couple of takes might have been deemed as filler for an album just shy of requisite new songs, but on *Mardi Gras* the gallop through a 1961 Ricky Nelson hit is tantamount to a lynchpin. Yes, Cook's writing is guilty of echoing Fogerty's while resolutely stuck in its shadow, but "Hello Mary Lou" is perhaps an even more vivid reminder of the ease and effortlessness with which the group could cut a pleasing groove when the stars were aligned.

Mardi Gras was the first Creedence album since their 1968 eponymous debut to fall short of the US Top 10, and didn't chart at all in the UK, its weak performance not helped by some particularly savage reviews. Writing in *Rolling Stone*, Jon Landau declared it "the worst album I have ever heard from a major rock band", and went as far as to suggest it constituted a deliberate act of sabotage by their erstwhile leader in giving the rhythm section equal writing opportunities: "In the future, it may be known as Fogerty's Revenge."

Relations between band members continued to deteriorate after the album's release, in tandem with escalating record company disputes. Fogerty, in particular, felt Fantasy Records boss Saul Zaentz had reneged on a promise to offer them a better deal with an increased royalty rate in line with that of other acts selling comparable amounts, while Cook (who held a business degree) was quoted as saying Fogerty, in his role as de facto leader, was to blame for accepting such a poor contract in the first place.

In-fighting covered with glee by America's popular culture press added heft to growing rumours of a split, and once a two-month tour (during which only one non-Fogerty song was performed) was completed in October the group announced they were calling it a day. It was left to lawyers to salvage the wreck of the band's finances, and it wasn't until 1983 that a California court awarded each member more than $8 million in unpaid royalties.

The original quartet would perform together only once more, jamming at Tom Fogerty's wedding in 1980, but prospects of anything longer lasting were soon dashed. "I was hoping there would be a lot of discussion," the groom told *Rolling Stone* a year or so after the nuptials. "I mean, Doug and Stu would put the band back together in a second, but a couple of days went by and John was gone again."

Tom was absent when his younger brother, Cook and Clifford took to the stage three years later to play their El Cerrito High School 20th-anniversary reunion (appearing as The Blue Velvets, briefly the band's name while still students), but communication throughout the rest of the decade was limited to further legal wrangles between both band members and former management.

A reconciliation was hoped for when Creedence were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1993, and although Tom Fogerty had died three years earlier after contracting HIV from a blood transfusion for back surgery, his widow brought his ashes to the ceremony in an urn. John Fogerty, however, refused to perform with Cook or Clifford (both in attendance), and instead rattled through a handful of the group's biggest hits accompanied by an ad hoc band that included Bruce Springsteen and Robbie Robertson.

Unbowed, the rhythm section took to the road again in 1995 as Creedence Clearwater Revisited, and having asked Fogerty to join them ("out of courtesy", according to the new group's website) were instead met with more legal woes. Their erstwhile frontman took out an injunction in 1997, forcing them to briefly change their name to Cosmo's Factory, until they won on appeal.

The duo continue to perform under the name, augmented by a revolving-door lineup, but intermittent press interviews in which Fogerty says he wouldn't rule out a reunion are taken with a pinch of salt by Cook and Clifford.

Fogerty's solo career, though healthily fruitful, is undeniably rooted in the music he made with Creedence, but in practical terms *Mardi Gras* has to stand as the group's swansong, their final, faltering bow. Its makers concede the unavoidable truth of it not being the way they would have wanted things to end, while arguing the record might have thrived were it made in a more positive atmosphere.

"When Tom left there was no serious talk of the rest of us calling it a day," Clifford said in 2015, "and the good vibes we had recording 'Sweet Hitch-Hiker' gave me hope that we could still cut it as a three-piece. Finally getting to contribute our own songs was great for me and Stu, but there was always a sense that John was only keeping us sweet for one record before reverting back to the old ways.

"You can talk about 'what if's until you're blue in the face, but there's a part of me that thinks we could have kept on had there been more collaboration earlier on. Tom might have stayed, and working more closely on our songs with John might have made all of us better writers, instead of him restricting himself from playing a bigger part in what we came up with."

Mardi Gras isn't necessarily a bad record, but it feels very much like a record made in response to an ultimatum: according to the letter of collaboration rather than to its spirit. When, after a career calling the shots, John Fogerty handed over the reins, he did so to a band that was sadly too inexperienced to take advantage of their new freedoms. GR

TRACKMARKS MARDI GRAS

1. Lookin' For A Reason ★★★
2. Take It From A Friend ★★
3. Need Someone To Hold ★★★
4. Tearin' Up The Country ★★★
5. Someday Never Comes ★★★★
6. What Are You Gonna Do? ★★
7. Sail Away ★★★
8. Hello Mary Lou ★★★
9. Door To Door ★★
10. Sweet Hitch-Hiker ★★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: Doug Clifford, Stu Cook, John Fogerty
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studios, San Francisco; Fantasy Records Studio A, Berkeley, California
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitars, keyboards, harmonica), Stu Cook (vocals, bass, guitars, keyboards), Doug Clifford (vocals, drums)
Highest chart position: UK –; US 12

Released: APRIL, 1973

THE BLUE RIDGE RANGERS

Five silhouettes, one man. Fogerty salutes his country-rock heroes on the most solitary of solo albums.

By Nigel Williamson

THERE are five Blue Ridge Rangers in faceless silhouette on the front cover of the album bearing their name, looking to all the world like a bunch of good ol' Appalachian moonshiners.

Search the back cover, though, and there is only a single line saying "Produced and arranged by John Fogerty". Unable to find anyone else to accompany him after the acrimonious falling out with his previous band, Fogerty was the Lone Ranger, playing and singing the album's every note. "Since the end of CCR I went out looking for new musicians but I couldn't find anyone on the same wavelength as me," he said at the time. "So I learned one instrument after the other and suddenly my musical horizon became endless."

Even the New Orleans-style brass section and the gospel choir were Fogerty alone in the studio with his multi-tracks. Solo records didn't come any more solitary than this one-man band, as the California boy who had sung about being born on the bayou transplanted himself to a back porch somewhere in Virginia or Tennessee for a grab-bag collection of country, bluegrass and gospel songs, paying tribute to the likes of Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, George Jones and Merle Haggard.

In truth, Fogerty was something of a late arrival at the country-rock campfire, for The Byrds, Dylan and the Eagles, among others, had already hitched their wagons before him. Yet it wasn't a total departure. Amid Credence's endless chooglin', there had been the occasional slice of country pie and the group's take on "Hello Mary Lou" on their final album, in retrospect, might be seen as a dry run for Fogerty's first solo project.

In his solitude he created a hugely engaging and unpretentious record on which he seemed to display an intuitive understanding of the country code which never descended into pastiche and allowed him to push and pull the music in his own direction.

"Each cut seems to flow into a river of feeling in which country and city, western and blues, gospel and secular blend together in a complete body of indigenous American music," Jon Landau wrote admiringly in *Rolling Stone*, a year after he had savaged CCR's *Mardi Gras* as "the worst album I have ever heard from a major rock band" and a year before he saw the future of rock'n'roll and named it Bruce Springsteen.

Fogerty spoke of creating "a new rock sound, light but strong with a Dixie influence" and throughout the dozen tracks you'd be hard pressed to guess he was a one-man band. His abilities on pedal steel, banjo, dobro, fiddle, bass, piano, organ, sax and trumpet are convincing enough to make you think he'd been playing them professionally all his life.

The only question mark lies over his drumming, which in places sounds stiff and over-rigid. He seemed to accept the point, and later expressed regret at the solitary approach. "It was a lot of work," he told *Billboard*. "About a week after it was done, I got the feeling the music would've been better if I had other really good musicians on it. But I wasn't running in that kind of circle back then."

THE opening track "Blue Ridge Mountain Blues" is a perfect statement of intent. Fogerty found the traditional song on a 78 by the old-time Carolina fiddler JE Mainer & His Mountaineers and had started playing it in late-night hotel jams with Stu Cook and Doug Clifford on CCR's final tour, jokingly dubbing the trio's off-duty alter ego The Shitkicker Three.

It was his love for the song that persuaded him to record an entire album in similar vein. "'Blue Ridge Mountain Blues' became kind of my own personal little national anthem," he said. He sticks closely to Mainer's arrangement for banjo, fiddle, dobro and guitar, adds a kicking bass drum and, on the song's release as a single six months before the album, kept up the fiction of a band and didn't let on that he was playing every instrument.

He found "Somewhere Listening (For My Name)" in a version by the Five Blind Boys on an album called *Negro Spirituals* which he bought on CCR's tour in Europe in 1971. His treatment sounds like a close

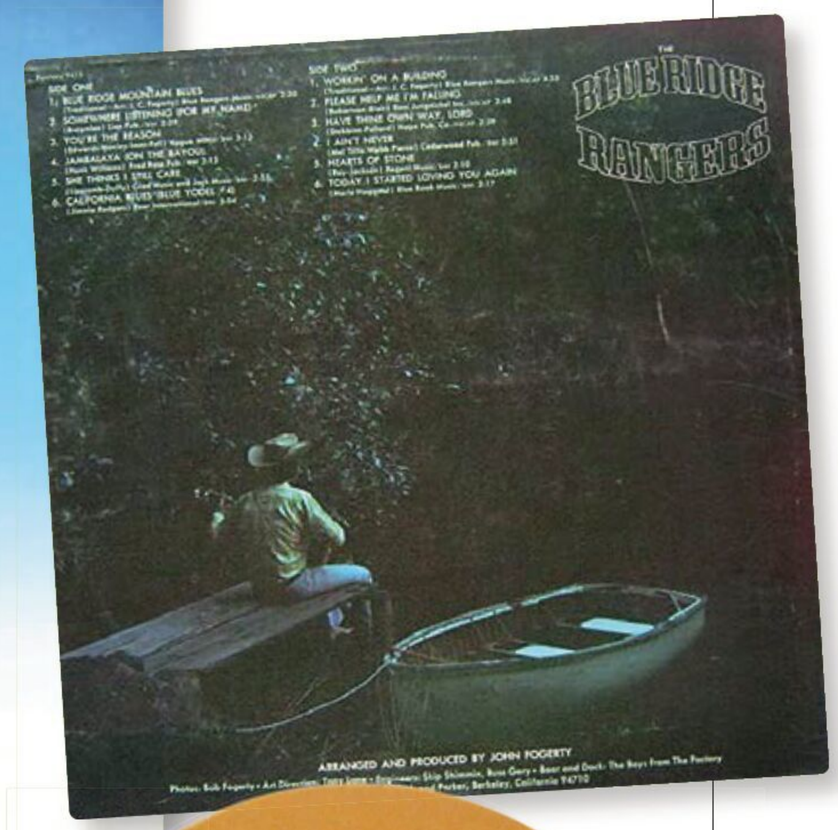
CRITICS' VERDICT

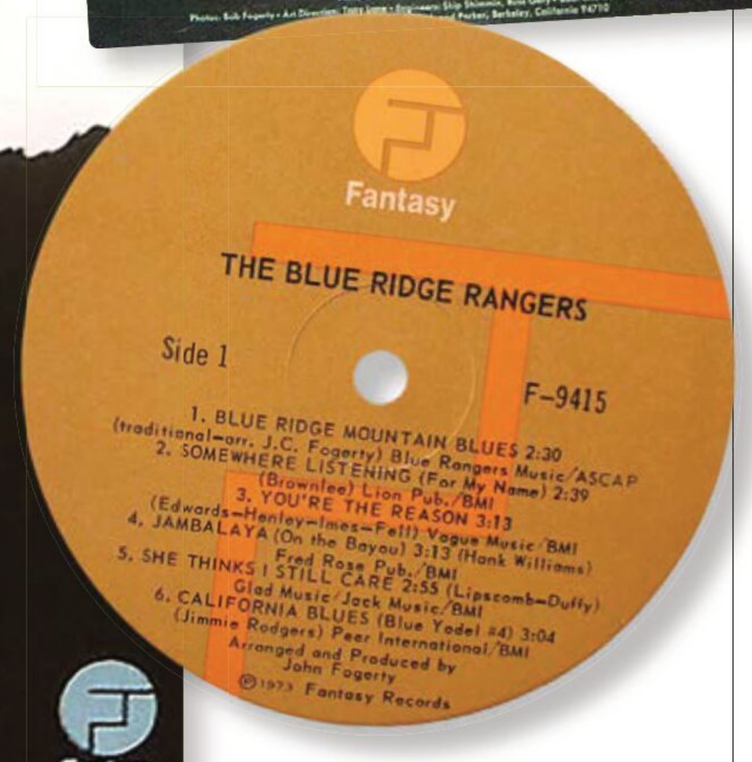
"One listen to this album will tell you this is just CCR country music... I can't see C&W fans enjoying this too much – it's too simplistic. And my advice to rock fans is: forget it."

MIKE OLDFIELD, MELODY MAKER, JUNE 30, 1973

"Fogerty and his trusty Palomino multi-track have made every plink, plunk, plonk 'n' voice on this debut album and it's damn good... If he continues to make albums of this quality we won't have heard the last of John Fogerty."

ROY CARR, NME, JUNE 9, 1973





cousin of Paul Simon's "Loves Me Like A Rock" on *There Goes Rhymin' Simon*, released a month after The Blue Ridge Rangers. Yet while Simon relied on The Dixie Hummingbirds to provide the sanctified chorus, Fogerty was his own gospel choir - and astonishingly it's hard to tell the difference.

"You're the Reason" is a cover of a 1961 country hit by Bobby Edwards, although Fogerty sings it more like Hank Williams. He immediately follows it with a version of Williams' "Jambalaya (On The Bayou)", which he plays in the western swing style of Bob Wills And His Texas Playboys.

On the George Jones and Merle Haggard weepies "She Thinks I Still Care" and "Today I Started Loving You Again" you wonder if Fogerty's trying just a little too hard to capture the ache of trademark country heartbreak, but his vocals carry enough conviction to pull it off, the over-tracked harmonies are brilliant and the twinkling piano and weeping pedal steel match the best of Nashville's countrypolitan elite. By contrast, "Please Help Me, I'm Falling", previously a 1960 country No 1 for Hank Locklin, is delivered in Bakersfield honky-tonk fashion.

Having smartly mixed and matched his country styles and sub-genres, on "California Blues (Blue Yodel #4)" he turned to the Jimmie Rodgers songbook, although Fogerty apparently learnt the song from Merle Haggard's version. He sings it with a glorious yodel and the addition of a Dixieland jazz band is a sublime touch.

The traditional gospel number "Workin' On A Building" borrows the guitar part from "Green River" to take it a bayou or two away from the Stanley Brothers' version from which he learnt the song. There are more Credence echoes on "I Ain't Never", a rocked-up version of a 1950s Webb Pierce hit.

With hindsight it stands as a significant landmark in the annals of country rock

The same era provides the inspiration for a Sun Records rockabilly romp with Scotty Moore guitar tropes on "Hearts Of Stone" while, in stark contrast, the turn-of-the-century hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" is delivered in an authentic bluegrass style, closely modelled on the Country Gentlemen's 1960 recording.

The LP sold poorly on release and Fantasy later tried to boost sales by reissuing it with Fogerty's name on the cover. With hindsight *The Blue Ridge Rangers* stands as a significant landmark in the annals of country-rock which only suffers in comparison with *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo* and *Nashville Skyline* by joining the hoedown after those trailblazing milestones. ER

TRACKMARKS THE BLUE RIDGE RANGERS

1. Blue Ridge Mountain Blues ★★★★
2. Somewhere Listening (For My Name) ★★★
3. You're The Reason ★★★
4. Jambalaya (On The Bayou) ★★★
5. She Thinks I Still Care ★★★★
6. California Blues (Blue Yodel #4) ★★★★
7. Workin' On A Building ★★★★
8. Please Help Me, I'm Falling ★★★
9. Have Thine Own Way, Lord ★★★★
10. I Ain't Never ★★★★
11. Hearts Of Stone ★★★★
12. Today I Started Loving You Again ★★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Fantasy Studios, Berkeley, CA
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, gtrs, piano, pedal steel, dobro, banjo, fiddle, trumpet, sax, drums)
Highest chart position: UK –; US 47

"BOY, WHAT AN EGO"

"Too many chefs spoil the soup," reckons *John Fogerty*, and so post–Creedence he takes sole command of the kitchen with the *BLUE RIDGE RANGERS*. How to create the primal music he craves? Start a bluegrass band in which he plays all the instruments. "I prefer, now, doing things that aren't so instantly commercial," he tells *Todd Tolces*

MELODY MAKER: 8/9/1973

"NIXON'S been a great boon to my songwriting," John Fogerty beamed from the Blue Ridge Ranger- besieged Studio "A" at Fantasy Records in Berkeley.

"As far as rock'n'roll is concerned, I was Nixon's biographer. Dylan was dealing more with the struggle in general than Nixon himself, but I never liked Nixon, that crumb, anyway."

And looking back on many of the past lyrics of Creedence, he very well may have been. "Fortunate Son" and "Effigy" were both political portraits and typical of the raunchiest band in California: Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Less than one year ago the band was disbanded and another large page in the text of rock'n'roll was folded. Fogerty had a unique sound that gave Creedence no less than six gold albums.

Since the breakup, all the band members have been involved in other solo projects, the most interesting and successful of which is John Fogerty's Blue Ridge Rangers. A keen collection of country & western tunes, laced with hints of swing and bluegrass comprised the first BRR album.

All the songs were by other artists because they were a mass of tunes John wanted to record in some time through the years – songs that he couldn't burden Creedence with. The band used to laugh at his country instrumentals.

The cover depicts five obscure musicians at sunrise: a fiddler, a banjo player, a stand-up bassman, a guitarist, and a lead singer whom most agreed was Fogerty. But they were all Fogerty.

And he played all the instruments – not just ➤

SAL VEDER/AP/SHUTTERSTOCK

Fogerty during an interview at Fantasy Records in Berkeley, CA, 1973

the ones on the cover but the ones you couldn't see like sax, piano, drums, pedal steel, electric bass, the mixer board, the arranging sheets, and so on.

The charge he gets out of playing the new country medium as compared to his old hard-charging rock style is equal. He doesn't look at anything as being better than another, but rather, varied forms of communication of which some, to his taste, he likes or dislikes accordingly.

"With Creedence, people started writing things like we sounded like '50s music and I never thought of it like that. Then, around 1969, I realised that 'Hey yeah, we really do!' Here we were about 15 years away from the originals but it had been goin' on in my head all along as if it had always been there.

"By the time The Beatles hit, I was totally away from rock radio because of my continuing frustration with it. But all I had to go by in the beginning was what was there at the beginning.I was tired of Motown's 14th version of 'Can I Get A Witness?'. I had gone away from rock but The Beatles brought me back."

Then where did the country step in after Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and after the lapse, The Beatles?

"Most of the good bluegrass stuff was made 20 years ago but it still gives me the same charge that Jerry Lee's 'Whole Lotta Shakin'' did. Bill Monroe's old bluegrass stuff had that same intensity that good old rock'n'roll had.

"Rhythm and blues is one half of rock'n'roll and the other half is country. That's where we got all this rockabilly and country-rock stuff. They didn't put the hyphens in then but it was the same – folk rock, jazz rock, Jesus rock, and our stuff which they called swamp rock."

Both "Jambalaya" and "Hearts of Stone", singles from Fogerty's album, broke well here in the US but not without a lot of resistance. To push an album or to generate purity for the cause, a tour is usually scheduled to increase sales and to give exposure. But how do you get a solo album with a big-band concept to go on the road when it's only one person?

John's getting some Travelling Rangers together who should be on the road by December, by which time the second BRR album will be out. "There're no definite dates yet because we've got a lot of recording to do and we've got to get the crystallisation of our sound together first. The sound I really want isn't there yet. I'd say we're about half-way there at this point.

"The first Rangers album is much like the first Creedence album in that it says, 'This exists and this is sorta in the area of what we're doin' but it's by no means polished.' I'd like to have people like Donald (Duck) Dunn or Al Jackson play with the Rangers, but of course they've got their own band together with Booker T.

"I'd like to have people who could double on instruments so I wouldn't have to travel with 60 people and I'd like some real horn players and some real fiddlers. I wasn't really satisfied with the first album and it was naturally for all the reasons that everyone says.

"It was set in my mind for years and I lived with it and it was just a matter of rising to the challenge. Gettin' good enough to do it, in simple terms," John chuckled, slightly red.

"I've had lot of trouble with... ah... I got a little scatterbrained or something and I couldn't concentrate; I couldn't get things down the way I wanted to and I kinda lost touch with my musical vocabulary. Just this past week or so it's started coming back to me, so the work on the second album, which will be all originals, is going much quicker."

During the session I attended, John had already laid down a driving, steady rhythm pattern and was laying down the drum tracks beside it. The tune, without words, sounded slightly reminiscent of "Did You Ever See The Rain". John laid down everything first, then went off to write the vocals later.

The production involved is tedious but is kept as simple as possible because the tunes are simple – John is trying to revive the simpleness of rock'n'roll with the flavour he enjoys the most. And he hopes to keep it attractive enough to the record buyer as well as to himself.

The popularity of his two singles indicates that simple rock not only exists but can also actually survive if kept professional enough in the production and arranging.

"I'm really glad I did those records and I guess I'll always feel pride for them as opposed to something I could've done like, well, uh, you know... it's just the way music's getting nowadays. It's so over-produced. It's so *blahhhhh*.

"I prefer now doing things that aren't so instantly commercial. I'm aware Creedence was a commercial success beyond my wildest dreams but I'm not ashamed of it. Sometimes a lot of people will put you down if you're too successful.

"CREEDENCE WAS A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS"

John Fogerty

"I remember one day when the Rangers started. I was listening to the radio and the DJ came on and said, 'And there's Tom Fogerty and all his friends...'

"I don't believe some of the things they come up with, those DJs, but the press is even more of a riot. I read one review on the first Ranger album that was really callin' me to task: 'That Fogerty, Goddamn him, he can't even give any credit to the musicians on the album. Boy, what an ego.'

Ha! I love that type of thing, especially if the guy ever gets the other half of the punchline."

JOHN learned guitar and piano in his early childhood. In fourth grade he'd be arranging songs on the radio in his head, how someday he'd like to make them sound. He remembered how he and his brother Tom would do improvisational arrangements where Tom rented an electric guitar, learned to play a few strings and John would get a hi-hat cymbal from someplace and would play lead on the piano with his other hand.

They'd tape the guitar part and play it through during the song with a little solo in the middle for added sweetness. His mother thought it was "really weird" but at the time, John claims, it was "just the way to do it".

This had to be the beginning of the producer. Actually, Fogerty never knew what a producer did until they paid one to do an early recording. At that point, John said, "Hell, I can do that! I produced from the first one through the last one, *Mardi Gras*." Fogerty smiled a slightly embarrassed pride, "but on *Mardi Gras* we all took our turns in the production and the final product was not one of my favourites. It was the old case of having too many chefs spoil the soup, I guess.

"I think all the wind went out of the sails when Tom left. Not necessarily because he left but because of the 'new deal' that had been set up just prior to his leaving, which was to have all the chefs... Of course Tom's real happy now, working by himself, with Doug (Clifford) and Stu (Cook) and with Jerry (Garcia) and Merl (Saunders), but it just didn't get to be as much fun as it used to be. Three musical directors just won't work in a band that has three members." GR

HESSLEFORS/ULLSTEINBILD VIA GETTY IMAGES

Big in Japan: CCR live at Nippon Budokan, Tokyo, February 29, 1972

Released: SEPTEMBER 1975

JOHN FOGERTY

A one-man strike broken, the hermit emerges to nurture a dwindling flame back to full strength. Unfinished perhaps, but future generations would li-li-like it. ***By Jon Dale***

IN the mid-1970s, John Fogerty ostensibly went on strike. Unhappy with his dealings with the music industry and its machinations – a running theme through much of his career – he downed tools in protest at his treatment by his label, Fantasy. Core to his complaints were the demands the label's contract made on Fogerty, expecting delivery of more than a dozen albums; Fogerty was also dissatisfied with royalty rates and promotion. These were untenable conditions for a character as individual and ornery as Fogerty could be, and there was a moment where it felt like his '73 album as Blue Ridge Rangers might be his last statement.

The Fantasy deal was partly reflective of a prior age of the music industry, where songwriters and musicians are workers alienated from the product of their labour, compelled to pump out commodities to feed the machine. But the 1970s ushered in an age of artist-sympathetic svengalis like David Geffen, who ended up breaking the stalemate between Fogerty and Fantasy, signing the former to his Asylum imprint for the USA and Canada, with Fantasy retaining international rights. According to some sources, the deal was for a cool million dollars.

Freed to make music again, Fogerty quickly busied himself with recording his second, self-titled solo album. Bunkering down in San Francisco, he recorded at Wally Heider Studios, where Creedence had cut a number of their albums. Playing all the instruments himself – as he'd done with *The Blue Ridge Rangers* album – John Fogerty was another self-produced affair, engineered by David Coffin. Fogerty's self-sufficiency might have had a degree of the control freak about it, but it was hard to argue when the results were as potent as some of the songs included here, several of which would take on second lives when covered by artists from across the water.

Indeed, Status Quo made "Rockin' All Over The World" so ubiquitous that it feels like their anthem, much as the group initially had reservations about covering the song. The bold, thunderous stomp of their version feels miles away from Fogerty's original take on the song – one of his finest moments, the stretched-taut guitars that score the track are a perfect counterpoint to Fogerty's parched call. Like the best CCR, it feels unassuming, unpretentious, but fiercely disciplined, in some respects minimalist in approach – the essence of the thing, not a note wasted.

The song's hook – its repeated chant of "*I like it, I like it, I li-li-like it*" – circled around in Fogerty's head for a while before taking its final form: "I didn't know what that song was gonna be about until a month after that," he recalled. "Even when it became "Rockin'...", I didn't know... Was I gonna start off in Sydney? Da-na-na-na-na! Melbourne!" Thankfully he abandoned this original conceit: "Nah, that's jive." If Status Quo amplified "Rockin"'s gleefully dumb simplicity, Fogerty's performance finds the joy and frivolity at the heart of the song, the looseness of its groove driving a hook that's deeply in love with rock'n'roll and its mythologies.

Some of John Fogerty's other great moments come when he digs into the music's history and pulls unexpected covers from scratchy old platters, like "You Rascal You", originally by Lovin' Sam From Down In 'Bam, aka Sam Theard, a legend of New Orleans swing. The song had previously been interpreted by Louis Armstrong, Muddy Waters, Django Reinhardt and countless others; Fogerty plays it free and easy, interpolating "Auld Lang Syne" for his cover's opening bars.

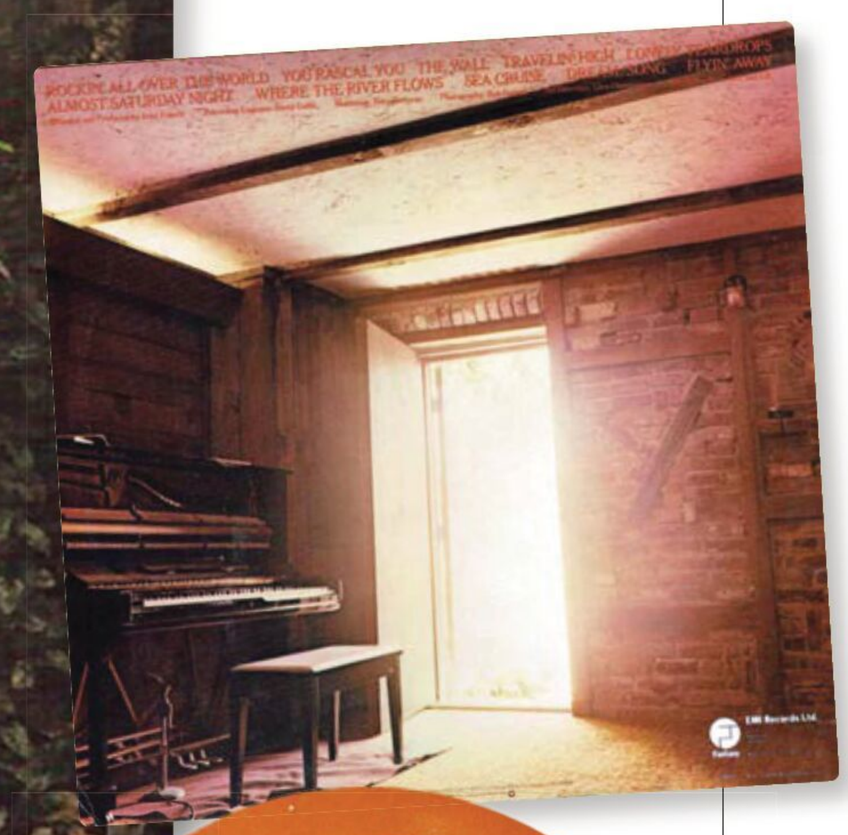
It speaks to a growing confidence on the part of Fogerty the artist. "I wouldn't have taken a chance on a tune like that five years ago," Fogerty said. "When I came up with the idea of doing 'Auld Lang Syne' in the front there, to me it was just funky and crazy."

Elsewhere, he takes on Jackie Wilson's "Lonely Teardrops" and Frankie Ford's "Sea Cruise". An inveterate scholar of rock'n'roll history, Fogerty's renditions are as loving as they can feel off-the-cuff; they're faithful but not slavish, and they never forget that the music was made, first and foremost, for dancing. "Sea Cruise" took a few mixes to get right – "The first day I mixed it, it wasn't there,

CRITICS' VERDICT

"It finds Fogerty back in the territory he knows best – rock'n'roll. He's a master at adapting it to the present day; never copying, but preserving its simplicity while using the heavy instrumentation and style of the '70s."

MICHAEL OLDFIELD, MELODY MAKER, 1/11/1975



and I was really crushed, I was in tears" – but the finished article is every bit as joyous as Ford's original. Indeed, Fogerty once claimed, cheekily, "Mine honks a little better than his does. Mine honks now like I thought his did then." Ford himself was impressed by the cover, stating when asked about the many versions of the song, "My particular favourite is John Fogerty's."

FOGERTY'S own songs are often strong – "Dream-Song"'s gentle yearning is quietly, enchantingly moving; "Flying Away"'s breezy sway recalls the Doobie Brothers, something Fogerty was aware of at the time, admitting, "I had to have a little conversation with myself to see if I would actually use that or not..." But it's the great lost song the Doobies wish they'd written, Fogerty's voice morphing from soaring yearn to cracked, raw insistence in a matter of milliseconds. The chiming riff of "Almost Saturday Night" inches toward power-pop at moments, before settling into a gorgeous plaint. It was almost lost to circumstance: "I wrote that song before I left Fantasy. That was all ready to go when I decided, well, gee, nobody may ever hear this if I stay here."

With the album ("Old Shep" to its maker, after his dog) under his belt,

Status Quo made "Rockin' All Over The World" so ubiquitous it feels like their song, not Fogerty's

Fogerty felt renewed and ready to hit the road. "My whole system inside's going, 'Systems are go, yeah,'" he said in a radio interview. "I really never intended to be a hermit, and now I'm at that beginning, first step forward where everything's possible again. I can't see any obstacles, there won't be anything entering to interrupt or stop the flow, as it were. It's confidence, but it's a simple naiveness too." But things would slowly unravel, as they so often did for Fogerty. The album didn't sell well; its follow-up, *Hoodoo*, went unreleased, neither Fogerty nor the label happy with the finished product. Fogerty would later reflect that he also thought the self-titled album was undercooked, an artistic disappointment rife with unfinished songs.

It was record executive Joe Smith who told Fogerty he needed to take some time out to sort out his personal issues. "I never dreamed it would take nine years," Fogerty would later say, "but there's no way I could ever make a record the way I was. I just couldn't concentrate on the music." Fogerty was haunted by bad business decisions and the collapse of the group that had made his name, but he was also driven by a vision of purity that he wasn't willing to compromise. "I was protecting the flame, but I can't say I was driven", was how he explained it to *The Guardian* in 2013. And it took Fogerty a hell of a long time to find that second wind.

TRACKMARKS JOHN FOGERTY

1. Rockin' All Over The World ★★★★★
2. You Rascal You ★★★★
3. The Wall ★★★★
4. Travelin' High ★★★
5. Lonely Teardrops ★★★
6. Almost Saturday Night ★★★★★
7. Where The River Flows ★★★★
8. Sea Cruise ★★★★
9. Dream Song ★★★★
10. Flyin' Away ★★★★

Label: Asylum/Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studios, San Francisco
Personnel: John Fogerty (all instruments)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 78

Released: JANUARY 14, 1985

CENTERFIELD

Nine years on, the defendant rises with an airtight case: rock'n'roll repurposed for a shinier decade.

By David Quantick

THERE are doldrums and there are doldrums. In 1985, John Fogerty's career was so far in the doldrums it could only be seen by other formerly popular acts who were also in the doldrums. It had been nine years since he'd last released anything, and that was a single from the album *Hoodoo*, a record which despite its many good qualities was deemed unreleasable by his label, Asylum. During that time, Fogerty continued to have legal problems with his former label Fantasy, but it was only in the middle of a new decade that he felt able to release new material, in the form of an album on which he once again wrote, sang and played everything.

Centerfield is the kind of record that fits its maker's career like the worn pitcher's mitt on the front cover and also serves as a stand-alone album which somehow sits outside that career. It's a record that harks back to John Fogerty's work with CCR – perhaps a little too well for some people with legal training – but it also works perfectly for the decade in which it was released.

Thanks to retro-fitted TV shows and movies, the '80s has now been rewritten as a decade where kids endlessly rode BMX bikes and endlessly sang synthpop hits by endless bands with funny haircuts in MTV videos and John Hughes movies. But in 1985 there was more to popular music than A Flock Of Seagulls: there was also the counterforce of blue-collar rock. Bruce Springsteen's *Born In The USA* had retooled rock'n'roll for MTV and been appropriated by Ronald Reagan and the right (they didn't "listen to the words", they could hear the chorus), acts like John Cougar Mellencamp and ZZ Top were on the rise and nostalgia was everywhere (even sci-fi comedies like *Back To the Future* rooted themselves in the rockin' 1950s).

And, where John Fogerty had been out of time in 1976 with the slightly dated, slightly trying-to-fit-in *Hoodoo*, in 1985 it was as though the world was waiting for him. With *Centerfield*, he followed his own baseball metaphors, stepped up to the plate and delivered a home run. It's a confident, hook-filled record with a clear-eyed sound and a joyous simplicity and its success was entirely deserved.

TWO figures dominate *Centerfield*. One is the Memphis Flash, Elvis Presley, the first and greatest rock'n'roll star of all time, and the other is an Oscar-winning Hollywood producer who also ran a record label, Saul Zaentz. Both men, for very different reasons, give this record – Fogerty's most successful solo record and a No 1 album in the United States – most of its energy. Both men inform several songs here – "Big Train (From Memphis)" and "I Saw It On TV" for Presley and "Mr Greed" and "Zanz Kant Danz" for Zaentz – and they kind of

CRITICS' VERDICT

"More than ever, John Fogerty sounds like the John Ford of rock'n'roll: a traditionalist, certainly; sentimental, yes, but rebellious, too; the last of the independents, if you like."

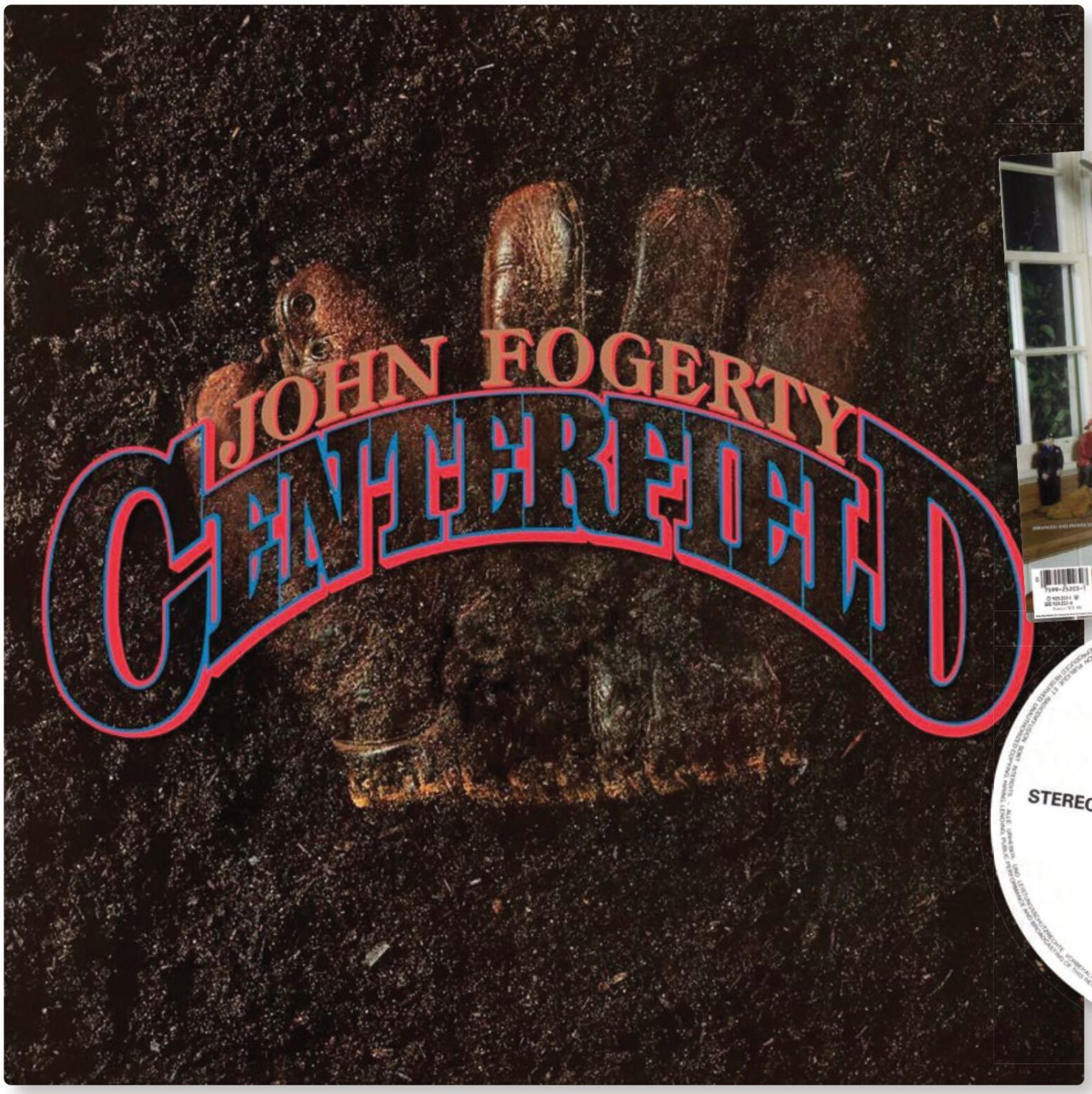
ALLAN JONES, MELODY MAKER, 9/2/1985

"This down-home DIY triumph fights for simple American glories as staunchly and lovingly as *Born In The USA*. All he needs now is a 'Dancing In The Dark'."

BARNEY HOSKYNS, NME, 9/2/1985

John Fogerty: knocking it out of the park with his third solo album

AARONRAPOPORT/CORBIS/GETTYIMAGES



represent two sides of Fogerty's life: one, the kid freed by rock'n'roll, the other the man strangled by litigation and contracts. A career hamstrung by court cases – famously, Fogerty would be sued for plagiarising himself with "The Old Man Down The Road"'s alleged similarities to CCR's "Run Through The Jungle", while "Zanz Kant Danz"'s equating of Saul Zaentz with a pickpocketing pig did not go unnoticed by the lawyers – does not for once overshadow the music. The songs here, from the euphoric "Rock'n'Roll Girls" to the title track, from "Big Train..." to "Old Man...", are as good as anything Fogerty did with Creedence, a remarkable achievement in any circumstances.

In the end, of course, it's the music that the listener focuses on, not the court cases. Fogerty's chosen path of recording entire albums himself, recreating the joyful noise of a band playing together, suggests that all he ever wanted was to play with like-minded musicians, and having found none, realised he could be those musicians himself. And in fact, *Centerfield* is a kind of parallel universe Creedence album. Nothing here – despite the legal claims – sounds much like a 1960s CCR song, but you can hear the Creedence in every track. "I Saw It On TV" is a celebration of watching the parade of history go by, and has the melancholy and regret of "Lodi". "The Old Man Down The Road" is as swamp as swamp gets. "Rock'n'Roll Girls" is as anthemic as "Bad Moon Rising". And so on. This is one of those albums which literally does not contain a bad song: even the Zaentz-dissing numbers, "Mr Greed" and "Zanz Kant Danz", have a swing and a vigour to them normally lacking from most music-biz sneer songs.

Nothing here sounds much like a CCR song, but you can hear the Creedence in every track

And the real glory of this album, from its great tunes to its sheer rocking swing, is surely that it's a vindication of John Fogerty's talent: unlike many records that are entirely one person's musical vision, *Centerfield* is, on its own terms, a perfect record. It sets out to encapsulate everything John Fogerty loves about rock'n'roll music, and it does so with effortless grace and admirable simplicity. The words are great, the tunes are marvellous and the riffs are rockin'. It's a dancing album and a singalong album, and it's also a concept album because it's a record that's about rock'n'roll and growing up in the rock'n'roll era that also sounds like (because it is) great rock'n'roll.

Kudos has to go to Fogerty for making his comeback with such verve and confidence: this record wasn't a return to form, it was a visit to form's house during which John Fogerty smashed in form's door, went in, grabbed form by the throat and kicked form's ass down the road. CR

TRACKMARKS CENTERFIELD

1. The Old Man Down The Road ★★★★
2. Rock And Roll Girls ★★★★
3. Big Train (From Memphis) ★★★★
4. I Saw It On TV ★★★★
5. Mr Greed ★★★
6. Searchlight ★★★
7. Centerfield ★★★★
8. I Can't Help Myself ★★★★
9. Zanz Kant Danz (renamed Vanz Kant Danz on later pressings) ★★★

Label: Warner Bros
Recorded at: Unknown
Produced by: John Fogerty
Personnel: John Fogerty (all instruments)
Highest chart position: UK 48; US 1

Released: SEPTEMBER 29, 1986

EYE OF THE ZOMBIE

Mired in '80s production, frustration and session-band stodge. Fogerty's fourth struggles along as he tries new things, with unexceptional results.

By Jason Anderson

JOHN FOGERTY'S own feelings about his fourth solo album couldn't be clearer. In his memoir *Fortunate Son*, he describes what he'd do if he saw someone at a music store about to take *Eye Of The Zombie* up to the counter. "Hey, don't get that one," he'd tell the imaginary consumer, who was possibly already feeling a little suspicious due to the glowering cat-faced guy on the cover. "It's not very good."

Fogerty does spare some affection for a handful of songs here, most notably "Change In The Weather", a *Centerfield* holdover that's the only track he'd revisit in performances beyond his 1986 tour. (He also re-recorded it for *The Blue Ridge Rangers Rides Again* in 2009.) As for the more dubious likes of the turgid title track, the hectoring "Headlines", the lumbering "Violence Is Golden" and the fizz-free "Soda Pop", he believes they may have turned out OK if someone else recorded them, but "how the album is shaped and played just doesn't seem like me." As Fogerty looks back on this misfire, his tone is so rueful, he may very well wish he could find the people he couldn't stop from purchasing it to offer them an apology, a hug and their money back.

Yet for all that goes wrong on *Eye Of The Zombie* – and Fogerty's own take on that is admirably comprehensive – there's something valiant about his efforts to stay in the game after so many years of being on the sidelines. As misshapen as many songs may be, at least they don't smack of complacency or easy choices. Instead, they're born out of real struggle: be it with the studio technology and production style that cruelly drain all feel and groove from Fogerty's music, the corruption and hypocrisy he perceives in the culture around him, or his own feelings of hurt and anger.

Fogerty readily cops to the latter in *Fortunate Son*, describing the bitterness that welled up inside him when he should've been basking in the glow of *Centerfield*'s triumph. To experience success again only increased his rancour over the years he lost. Nor had his warfare with Saul Zaentz abated. Facing the threat of a defamation lawsuit by Fogerty's former Fantasy boss, Warner Bros changed the title of *Centerfield*'s closing potshot "Zanz Cant Danz" to "Vanz Kant Danz" on later pressings – Zaentz sued anyway. As Fogerty worked on *Eye Of The Zombie*, there were also early rumblings of the copyright infringement suit that eventually went to court in 1988, in which Zaentz infamously charged Fogerty with self-plagiarism over "The Old Man Down The Road". According to Fogerty, "Green River" was initially the song that Zaentz targeted as the soundalike before training his guns on "Run Through The Jungle".

Though such matters exacerbated Fogerty's miserable state of mind, he pressed on. Having found the one-man-band process lonely and laborious on *Centrefield*, he asked Lenny Waronker to help him put together a band. The recruits included bassist Neil Stubenhaus and drummer John Robinson, a favourite of Quincy Jones whose credits included Michael Jackson's *Off The Wall*. Rather than develop music in the studio as he had with CCR, Fogerty looked to the session players to beef up the demos he'd written and recorded late at night in his basement office at Warners. Worried about sounding out of date as he prepared to produce the album himself at the Lighthouse in North Hollywood, Fogerty updated his studio skillset and learned how to use some of the era's shiniest new gear.

The impact of all these factors are distressingly clear on the four songs that open *Eye Of The Zombie*. While Fogerty may have intended for the instrumental "Goin' Back Home" to begin the album like the first rays of a new rising sun, the tacky tapestry of synths evoke the worst of '80s New Age gloop. On the title track, the needlessly busy yet utterly leaden contributions of the players hamper Fogerty's attempt to build momentum and menace. His playing gives the song some fire even if the lyrics he hollers have dated poorly, steeped as they are in old horror-movie clichés and colonialist fantasies of primitive tribesfolk summoning inhuman terrors. Worse yet is "Headlines" with its third-rate bar-band choogling, Fogerty's carping about the ills of the day and tired targets like a *"freakin' deacon wearin' military shoes"*. But at least he kept the guitars front and centre – no such luck with "Knockin' On Your Door", a would-be stab at Stax-style

CRITICS' VERDICT

"John Fogerty, who's seemingly been writing great songs longer than anyone else, stands slightly apart from the rest. But, while it's reassuring for rockists that he has made another record, this is mostly a tedious grind down a much travelled rock rut... the hamfisted song structures and the hackneyed guitar crunch soon begin to grate."

DONALD McRAE, NME, SEPTEMBER 27, 1986

soul ruined by a thin, chirpy keyboard sound and production that makes the music here seem airless even by the over-compressed standards of the day.

With its resemblance to Steve Winwood's far glossier forays into yuppie-era R&B, the latter song is also one of many indications of how badly Fogerty fails at retooling his modus operandi for the '80s compared to peers who could've just as easily fallen out of step. Just a few years earlier, CCR's greasy Texan brethren in ZZ Top used sequencers and drum machines to supercharge their sound to shockingly successful effect on *Eliminator* and *Afterburner*. A year after *Eye Of The Zombie*, Bruce Springsteen would release *Tunnel Of Love*, a moody, synth-heavy masterstroke of 808s and heartbreak.

Fogerty demonstrates no such affinity for the new, which is why *Eye Of The Zombie* only truly comes to life on its most unabashedly CCR-like song. While the ominous words in "Change In The Weather" may share the other songs' dyspeptic-slash-dystopic nature, they don't detract from the joy in Fogerty's performance as he rumbles through the gospel-style chorus and rips through the fiery solos that fill the final three minutes.

There's something valiant about his efforts to stay in the game after years on the sidelines

ALAS, the machinery and gadgetry regain the upper hand with "Violence Is Golden", a condemnation of Reagan-era war profiteers in the vein of *Centerfield*'s "Mr Greed" that trudges on interminably. The mechanistic feel worsens on "Wasn't That A Woman" and "Soda Pop", two stabs at funk-pop that fall far short of Peter Gabriel's like-minded efforts on *So*, a far more tech-savvy album by another geezer who had no right to be cool in 1986.

The closer "Sail Away" begins with another surplus of regrettable synths but improves swiftly, ending *Eye Of The Zombie* on a note of gentleness that evokes "Who'll Stop The Rain" but is nowhere else to be found here. Not even the song's resemblance to one of Jimmy Buffett's cod-calypso singalongs detracts from the poignancy of the sentiment as Fogerty sings of *"leaving all this pain behind"*. Perhaps he could sense he was at the beginning of a long process of escaping his anger and depression by embracing sobriety and family life. By the time he released another solo album 11 years later, Fogerty was a very different man than the frustrated and volatile one who rages through *Eye Of The Zombie*, ending it spent and eager for change. CR

TRACKMARKS EYE OF THE ZOMBIE

1. Goin' Back Home ★★
2. Eye Of The Zombie ★★★
3. Headlines ★★
4. Knockin' On Your Door ★★
5. Change In The Weather ★★★★★
6. Violence Is Golden ★★★
7. Wasn't That A Woman ★★
8. Soda Pop ★★
9. Sail Away ★★★★

Label: Warner Bros
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: The Lighthouse, Hollywood
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitars, keyboards), Neil Stubenhaus (bass), John Robinson (drums), Alan Pasqua (keyboards), Bobby King, Terry Evans, Willie Green Jr (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK –; US 26

18+

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Released: MAY 20, 1997

BLUE MOON SWAMP

Pilgrimage and perfection. The road is long to Fogerty's return, via Mississippi and studio marathon, but the record trips along like Creedence refreshed. ***By Stephen Deusner***

EVEN before John Fogerty starts singing "Southern Streamline", you know whose song it is. The opening track on his fifth album kicks off with a shuffling snare and an emphatically strummed guitar, which coalesce into something like a swampy two-step that may be the best approximation of Creedence Clearwater Revival since the Fogerty brothers stopped talking to each other.

With its lyrics about "big wheels rollin' right on time" and its nimble blues riffing, the song is steeped in the music made by his old band, but it's not a song about the past. It's more about looking ahead to see what and especially who those big wheels are bringing to you. In fact, Fogerty sounds light on his heels, perhaps a little giddy when he gets to that switchback hook right after the chorus – "*I got a little letter this morning*" – which is a melodic contraption straight out of *Cosmo's Factory*.

"Southern Streamline" is, in other words, the ideal opener for an album that took the Northern California singer-songwriter four-and-a-half years to make – roughly the amount of time Creedence was originally active – but he sounds like he's playing every note for the first time. On one hand, that lengthy hiatus took him out of the game right at the heyday of alt.rock and alt.country, two movements he had directly inspired; on the other hand, he had finally emerged victorious after two decades' worth of lawsuits between him and Saul Zaentz, head of Fantasy Records. Those legal skirmishes had divided the band, even alienating him from his own brother Tom Fogerty, who died of respiratory complications in 1991. The brothers hadn't reconnected or reconciled.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Not for a single milisecond is one ever in doubt as to Fogerty's favoured mode and location. Unfortunately, the lack of surprise extends to the execution, too. Would you, for instance, be astonished to find that 'Hot RodHeart' is a chugging car song of no particular accomplish-ment, or that 'Southern Streamline' likewise hymns the mighty iron horse?"

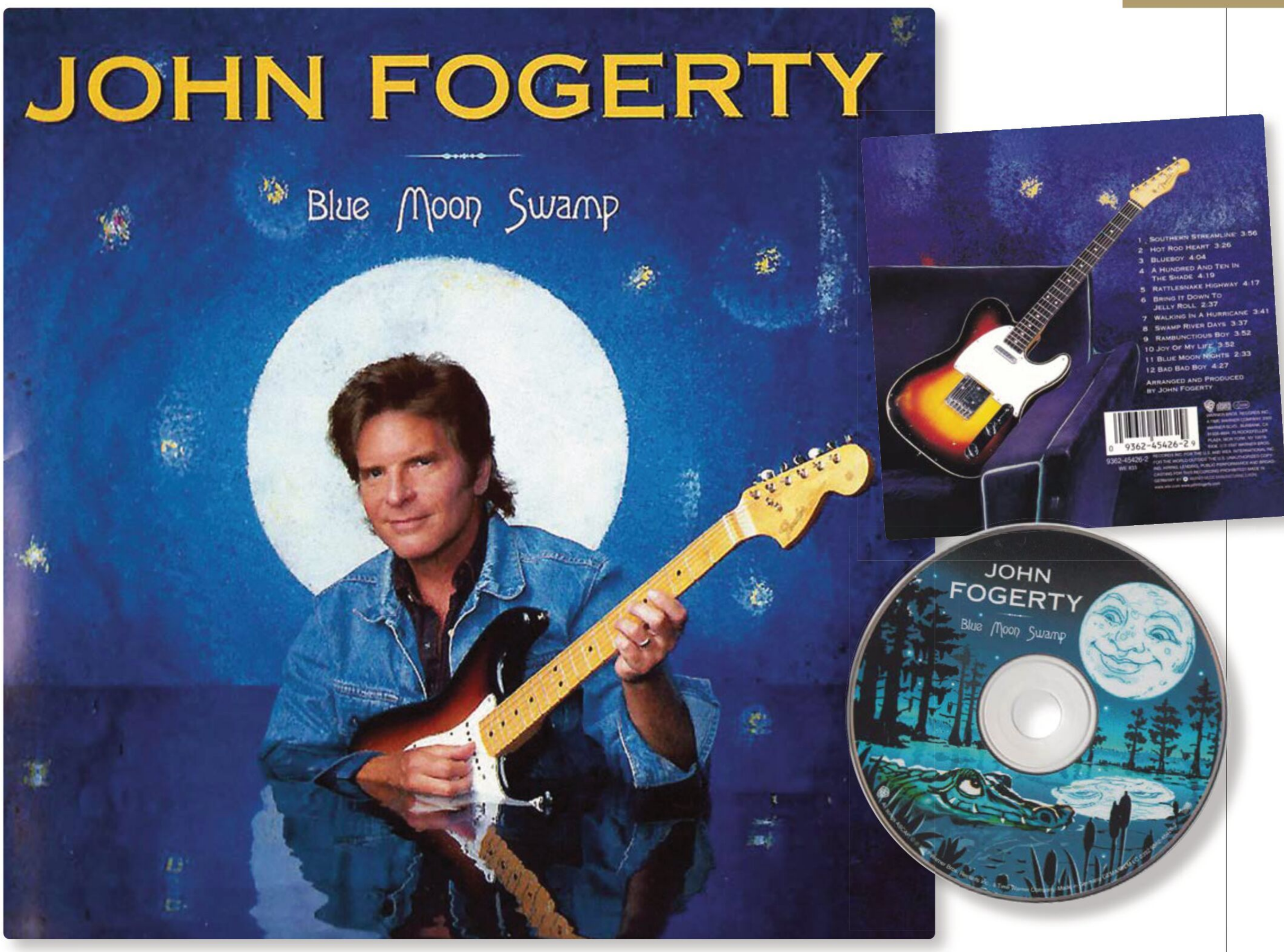
TOM WYNDHAM, UNCUT, 7/1997

Despite that particular tragedy, the long-gestating *Blue Moon Swamp* presents a man freed of his burdens, loose of his weighty legacy. He was newly remarried with young kids and creatively rejuvenated, and had even moved to his wife's hometown of South Bend, Indiana. Fogerty presents himself as a "*restless guy*" and a "*rambunctious boy*" high-stepping through these riffs and grooves and melodies, and his benign hyperactivity drives these songs. "*Look at me, Lord, I ain't got a dime*", he declares on "Bring It Down To Jelly Roll", arguably his best and certainly his weirdest vocal performance on the album, "*But I can dance*".

These songs have their roots in several pilgrimages Fogerty made to the Mississippi Delta and Parchman Farm in the early 1990s – his first trips despite writing so many songs about the region. Down South, he followed in the footsteps of some of his heroes, Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters among them, and even paid to have headstones placed on the graves of Charley Patton, James "Son" Thomas, and other musicians who had died in undeserved poverty and obscurity. Their influence bubbled to the surface on the music he was dreaming up, not just the woe-is-me rural blues but also the more upbeat songs you might hear in juke joints and roadhouses. Dance music, in other words. Even when his songs are slow, they still have movement and action. "Joy Of My Life", a love song to his new wife and family, sounds like a souvenir of that roadtrip, with his dobro riffs scribbling mash notes in the margins of the music. "A Hundred And Ten In The Shade" conjures not just the heat but also the sweltering humidity of a hot summer day spent busting rocks on the backroads. The Fairfield Four play the roles of convicts on Fogerty's chain gang, with Isaac Freeman's bass sounding impossibly low and lowdown.

For that song Fogerty taught himself to play dobro in order to capture the arrangement bouncing around his head. He spent two years getting comfortable with the instrument, refining his technique, and honing his chops before he felt like he could do the song justice. Of course, Fogerty's perfectionism was already notorious, but this intense process seemed relentless even for him. One track took 18 long months of studio work to complete, at the end of which he deemed it unusable and scrapped it.

The marathon sessions for *Blue Moon Swamp* reportedly involved 25 drummers, only six of which appear on the final album (including Kenny Aronoff from John Mellencamp's band and Chad Smith from the Red Hot Chili Peppers). Fogerty shuffled through just as many bass players (including old pal Donald "Duck" Dunn from Booker T & The MG's).



SO it's a small miracle that *Blue Moon Swamp* never sounds laboured over. Rather than choking the life out of it, Fogerty's manic tinkering only intensifies the sense of freedom and motion in these songs. It's more than just a return to form, no matter how much the lifeless *Eye Of the Zombie* might necessitate such a thing. Instead, this album was a reassertion of form, an acknowledgment of the durability of Creedence as a foundation on which Fogerty could continue to build and experiment. As a result, *Blue Moon Swamp* feels comfortable, effortless: the template for every album Fogerty has made since.

In addition to the death of his brother, his new marriage and family, and his reconnection with the roots of his music, Fogerty turned 50 as he was finishing up *Blue Moon Swamp*, a milestone that would provoke a spell of backwards-looking and stock-taking in anybody. When he toured with a three-piece band behind this comeback album, he dusted off several old chestnuts from his Creedence days and even played "Fortunate Son" for the first time in 25 years. This wasn't the middle-aged nostalgia that defined a whole swathe of pop music in the 1980s; rather, Fogerty was reminiscing with much more purpose. He was making peace with his past, especially on "Swamp River Days". With its spry rhythms and breezy melody, it's a tender ode to the music of his youth and a surprisingly generous remembrance of his old band. "*Sweet Susie, do you think about me?*" Fogerty asks, perhaps in reference to their cover of Dale Hawkins' song. "*That was good as it's ever gonna be/ Give me those swamp river days again*". GR

Fogerty's manic tinkering only intensifies the sense of freedom and motion in these songs

TRACKMARKS BLUE MOON SWAMP

1. Southern Streamline ★★★★★
2. Hot Rod Heart ★★
3. Blueboy ★★★★
4. A Hundred And Ten In The Shade ★★★
5. Rattlesnake Highway ★★★★
6. Bring It Down To Jelly Roll ★★★★★
7. Walking In A Hurricane ★★★
8. Swamp River Days ★★★★
9. Rambunctious Boy ★★★
10. Joy Of My Life ★★★★
11. Blue Moon Nights ★★★★
12. Bad Bad Boy ★★★

Label: Warner Bros
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: The Lighthouse, North Hollywood, CA
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitars, lap steel, dobro, sitar, farfisa organ, vocals, mandolin, bouzouki, tambourine), Kenny Aronoff (drums, percussion), Chad Smith (drums), Chester Thompson (drums), Vinnie Colaiuta (drums), Eddie Bayers (drums), Jeff Donovan (drums), Bob Glaub (bass), Donald "Duck" Dunn (bass), Howie Epstein (bass), John Clayton (bass), Michael Rhodess (bass), Phil Chen (bass), Dave Taylor (bass), Luis Conte (percussion), Ronnie Bowman (backing vocals), Don Rigsby (backing vocals), Kenny Smith (backing vocals), Julia Waters (backing vocals), Maxine Waters (backing vocals), Oren Waters (backing vocals), James Hill (backing vocals), Isaac Freeman (backing vocals), Wilson Waters Jr (backing vocals), Robert Hamlett (backing vocals), Joe Rice (backing vocals), Ryan Freeland (handclaps), Bob Fogerty (handclaps), Andy Brauer (handclaps), Tommy "V" Verdonck (handclaps), Lyndsay Fogerty (crowd noise), Shane Fogerty (crowd noise), Tyler Fogerty (crowd noise), Julie Fogerty (crowd noise)
Highest chart position: UK 182; US 37

Released: SEPTEMBER 21, 2004

DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN

Have we had this war before? A settled, reconstructed Fogerty muses on endless conflict, marital bliss and witchcrafts both ancient and technological. ***By Nick Hasted***

"IF I felt the need right now, I could probably write 'Fortunate Son' again," John Fogerty told *Rolling Stone* upon *Deja Vu All Over Again*'s release. But putting a broken muse back together was so much easier said than done.

Asked by journalist Bob Mehr to explain CCR's seven albums and 10 original double-A-side singles, in which basic rock'n'roll of often barely two minutes duration came to define the two years in which he wrote them, Fogerty recalled a fugue state. "I had started to stay up late in my little apartment," he said. "Basically, I was going into a trance." Staring at a "blank light-coloured wall", lights low, he would soberly float into a place of perfect creative freedom.

He contrastingly spoke about his career's subsequent 25 years, and the good years they retrospectively poisoned, much as he spoke about his parents' divorce when he was eight. His reaction to the latter was "ashamed... clumsy, awkward", he told Mehr. His attitude to the songwriter he'd been, he told *Goldmine*'s Craig Werner, was "jumbly and painful", leaving him "confused about who I really am... what kind of a musician I am, what kind of a writer, what my true persona is". He and brother Tom had stayed effectively estranged until Tom's death, and when your despised label also owns your best work, and your only solo success is sued for self-plagiarism, relaxed, natural writing focus must be hard to reclaim.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"The title song successfully and wistfully – with echoes of 'Who'll Stop The Rain' – refracts the Iraq war through the prism of Vietnam's tragedy. Disappointingly, though, much of the rest of *Déjà Vu*... consists of musical dead-ends and slight domestic ditties."
LUKE TORN, UNCUT, 10/2004

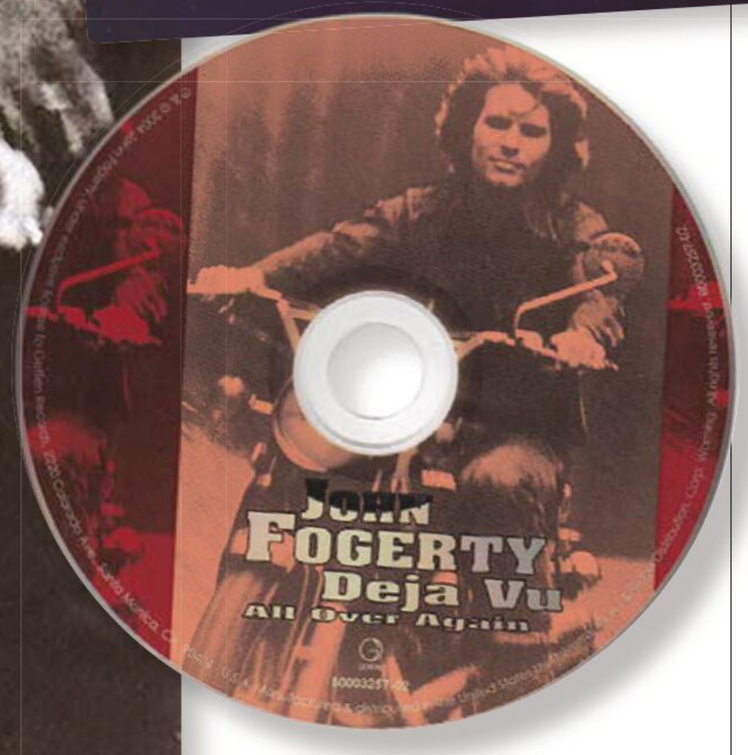
Fogerty's '60s peers entered the 21st century having survived a decadent '70s and hostile '80s to be rewarded as wizened, wise survivors in the '90s. But Fogerty was as likely to manage a "Not Dark Yet" as Little Richard. He'd at least reintegrated his old songs into a finally viable stage act, and if *Blue Moon Swamp* brought him little closer to comparable new writing, it had provided a convincing, relaxed roots sound to work with. Relief at even this had been enough for a Grammy. When Saul Zaentz sold his interest in Fantasy Records as it was merged into the jazz label Concord in 2004, Fogerty would immediately re-sign, healing another wound.

The Iraq war, meanwhile, inspired *Deja Vu All Over Again*'s opening title track. If it wasn't another "Fortunate Son", it at least reacquainted him with the pure inspiration behind Creedence's songbook. He had written it in September 2003, with the war underway. Walking into the writing residence that approximated his old monastic apartment, he planned a swamp-rock tune, till he was blindsided. "This thing entered my head," he told *American Songwriter*. "This melody, this sound, just grabbed me, very much like when I was sitting in front of that wall...What I heard was, '*Did you hear 'em talking about it on the radio?*'" He also heard "that terrible, mournful, ironic sound that tugged at your heartstrings. I didn't understand it... I think what I sensed later was a mother's mournful cry for her child."

"Deja Vu (All Over Again)" starts with a tough clang of folk guitar, a feint of the descending bassline of "Have You Ever Seen the Rain?" recalling Vietnam vibes. "*Started with a whisper, like it did before*", Fogerty moans, readying himself for the return of the body count on the news, and the body bags. "*One by one, I see the old ghosts rising*", he continues, perhaps slipping back to the Civil War, "*stumbling across the Big Muddy/Where the light gets dim*". Iraq here bleakly continues "*a war that has no end*". The melody still rises appealingly, in a softer, more reflective setting than CCR. "The guy singing "Fortunate Son" is screaming from the top of the mountain, wanting everybody to listen," Fogerty told *Ice*, "'Deja Vu...' is more intimate."

This genuinely engaged baby-boomer (and contemporary of real-life "fortunate son" George W Bush) couldn't get his new protest on the radio. It did, though, reach younger crowds when Fogerty joined 2004's pre-election Vote For Change tour, usually on bills with REM, Bright Eyes, and Bruce Springsteen. Footage of the Washington, DC concert sees Fogerty backed on "Deja Vu (All Over Again)" by the E Street Band.

The album's remaining songs were less sure-footed. "Sugar-Sugar (In My Life)"



is a tribute to Fogerty's second wife Julie, skipping along an acoustic groove in simple tribute to domestic bliss. "I Will Walk With You" is sprightly bluegrass, all mandolin shivers and dobro twangs, likely addressed to the couple's children, with their "*little hand in mine*".

"Rhubarb Pie" visits some imagined Depression back-porch, more country than blues with its happy vegetable-based innuendo, while the more fantastical blues of "Wicked Old Witch" leaves space for trademark, authentically rocking CCR guitar.

The nearest thing to a modern rock snarl is, though, "She's Got Baggage". This exasperated sketch of a high-maintenance girlfriend – "*Watch out, we got a whacked-out woman*" – splices "Summertime Blues" guitar with dumb Ramones backing vocals (Fogerty again, credited as "skateboard dudes"). "Radar" is reggae-loping new wave, saved by Benmont Tench's Steve Nieve-worthy organ flights.

"Nobody's Here Anymore" then locates an appealing tune for its complaint about kids today zoning out on computers, women in SUVs gabbing on mobiles, and even, wryly, a kid at the back of the class, "*listening to the rock star on the CD*" instead of the defeated teacher. Mark Knopfler's guitar can't help but recall "Money for Nothing" in this AOR grumble.

This is the sound of a man adding well-crafted, unmemorable footnotes to gentle, familiar roots

DEJA Vu All Over Again's title isn't, as one might first think, an admission of defeat, describing wearily familiar contents. It does, though, offer the company of a happily married man sinking into comforting, antique styles for inspiration. Engagement with modern modes unhappily strains him. His old roaring muse isn't, it seems, ever coming back. Instead this is the sound of a man once so wounded by music, the fate of his own especially, that he turned the radio off and lost almost everything, contentedly adding well-crafted, unmemorable footnotes to gentle, familiar roots.

CCR remains the motherlode. These are stray nuggets from a man profoundly relieved to be digging anything at all. *GR*

TRACKMARKS DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN

1. Deja Vu (All Over Again) ★★★
2. Sugar-Sugar (In My Life) ★★★
3. She's Got Baggage ★★
4. Radar ★★★
5. Honey Do ★★
6. Nobody's Here Any More ★★★
7. I Will Walk With You ★★★
8. Rhubarb Pie ★★★
9. Wicked Old Witch ★★★
10. In the Garden ★★

Label: DreamWorks
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: NRG Recording, Los Angeles; Glenwood Place Studios and O'Henry Recording Studios, Burbank, CA
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitar, banjo, percussion, organ, keyboards, background vocals), Mark Knopfler (guitar), Bob Britt (electric slide guitar), Dean Parks (slide guitar, Rock-a-billy guitar), Benmont Tench (organ), Viktor Krauss (bass), Paul Bushnell (bass), David Santos (bass), Kenny Aronoff (drums), Alex Acuña (percussion), Jerry Douglas (dobro), Bob Applebaum (mandolin), Michael DeTemple (mandolin), Aaron Plunkett (spoons), Eric Valentine (additional parts, sound mixing), Kelsy Fogerty (vocal), George Hawkins Jr (background vocals)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 23

Released: OCTOBER 2, 2007

REVIVAL

Play a little bit of that Creedence vibe... Back in the Fantasy fold, Fogerty honours his past while still trying to fix the present.

By Terry Staunton

TO say John Fogerty was still in thrall to the legacy of the group that made him a star 35 years after he disbanded them is something of an understatement. It's inescapable in the title of this album, and in the self-referential lyrics to one of its key tracks: "*Heard the waitress tell a guy standin' over by the jukebox/'Hey, you can't go wrong/If you play a little bit of that Creedence song*'".

The fact the familiar chug and "choogle" of "Creedence Song" also sneaks a "*little bit*" of a vintage hit into the mix (a guitar lick lifted wholesale from the intro to "Green River") further compounds the sense of this seventh solo album being the most outright after-the-event celebration yet of Fogerty's own history. The previous year's live offering *The Long Road Home* boasted 17 CCR numbers, compared with 10 from his solo catalogue, and *Revival* is the post-breakup record on which he most consciously adheres to the template that spawned a string of platinum albums way back when.

Certainly, the brevity of the list of supporting players mirrors the Creedence set-up, John for the most part kicking back with a single rhythm guitarist, bassist and drummer – although the Hammond B3 and Wurlitzer electric piano of The Heartbreakers' Benmont Tench puts a touch more meat on the bones of three tracks. It's especially effective when underpinning the hymnal "River Is Waiting", which presents itself as a plaintive next chapter to "Proud Mary".

Here is where, aged 62 at the time of recording, a wiser and more thoughtful Fogerty seems to be trying to make peace with his past. The album even appears on the Fantasy label, the company (in an earlier incarnation) he squared off against in a succession of messy legal conflicts, and while a handful of songs do not overtly match the fabric of former glories, a subtext is evident that could be interpreted as a commentary on the bad old days.

"Gunslinger" employs the imagery of bygone western towns as a metaphor for Republican America and the warmongering of George W Bush and, especially, his hawkish vice president Dick Cheney, yet there's a parallel interpretation of its writer autopsying the battle-scarred debris of mistakes made closer to his own back yard: "*Lookin' out across this town/Kind of makes me wonder how/All the things that made us great/Are left so far behind*".

The Bush administration also gets it in the neck on two more inclusions, a brace of protest songs that echo with the haves-and-have-nots rage against Nixon's White House the singer venomously articulated on 1969's "Fortunate Son". The swamp blues of "Long Dark Night" spits out a succession of critiques about what goes on in the corridors of power, fearing the night still has some way to go "*before this thing is done*".

BACK in 1970, Creedence's "Run Through The Jungle" was routinely read as a reaction to American troops serving in Vietnam, before Fogerty belatedly iterated the song was written as a broader observation of the proliferation of guns in the "*jungle*" in urban America as a whole. There's considerably less chance of misinterpretation on the four-on-the-floor ferocity of "I Can't Take It No More", no disguising the anger fuelled by another generation risking their lives for an unnecessary war, this time in Iraq: "*You know you lied about the casualties/You know you lied about the WMDs/You know you lied about the detainees/All over this world*".

These are songs where, while still working from the sonic blueprint of yesteryear's commercial triumphs, their engaged creator addresses the relentless cancer of a country that made him put pen to paper in the first place. It's perhaps too easy, and lazy, to check out the title of the album and assume Fogerty's "revival" is solely tapping into an effortlessly marketable bygone revenue stream, when in truth he continues to hold high the placards of dissent that similarly cross-generational contemporaries Bob Dylan and Neil Young refuse to abandon.

He continues to hold high the placards that Bob Dylan and Neil Young refuse to abandon

He's deceptively cute and faux-fine on the persuasive opener, "Don't You Wish It Was True?", its singalong melody and portrait of a contented American way of life cloaking harder, colder truths of a more sinister and cynical underbelly. It's arguably a musical sidebar to Thornton Wilder's 1938 Pulitzer-winning stage play *Our Town*, or film director Frank Capra's post-Depression masterpiece *It's A Wonderful Life*, exposing the contradictions in the chocolate-box perfection of a country lying to itself while struggling to digest the inherent bitterness of supposedly palatable soft centres.

In that sense, Fogerty pulls off the neat trick of peddling warm-hearted nostalgia (acknowledging both his own art and that of other iconic 20th-century writers in parallel fields), while reminding the powers that be he's still watching. He's undoubtedly pitching his wares to millions of baby boomers who still have "Bad Moon Rising" T-shirts hanging in their closets, but he's also giving them a nudge, telling them the good fight goes on.

It should also be noted that the harking back to sounds that provide the meat-and-potatoes of "heritage" radio station playlists doesn't end with Fogerty's own canon. "Summer Of Love" is so blatant in its appropriation of Cream's "Sunshine Of Your Love", it comes as a surprise that Jack Bruce and Eric Clapton aren't credited as co-writers. Likewise, the descending chord sequence and subject matter of "Broken Down Cowboy" suggests an Eagles hybrid of "Lyin' Eyes" and "Desperado" – but seeing as they borrowed so liberally from Creedence in the first place, who's keeping score?

Part of this album's ability to please, and to connect with its intended audience, is due to the swiftness and discipline with which it was put together. Lest we forget, in the first flush of their success, Creedence released three multi-platinum LPs in a single calendar year (10 months, if you're really counting), and a similar work ethic informs the dozen tracks here, committed to tape in an impressive 12 days, just like he used to.

For many fans, CCR ended on a low point with a muddled album (*Mardi Gras*) largely bereft of the band's core values. It took its time to get here, but there's an intriguing school of thought that *Revival* was Fogerty's way of giving his devotees the long-overdue closure they craved. CR

TRACKMARKS REVIVAL

1. Don't You Wish It Was True? ★★★★
2. Gunslinger ★★★
3. Creedence Song ★★★
4. Broken Down Cowboy ★★★★
5. River Is Waiting ★★★
6. Long Dark Night ★★★
7. Summer Of Love ★★★
8. Natural Thing ★★
9. It Ain't Right ★★
10. I Can't Take It No More ★★★
11. Somebody Help Me ★★★
12. Longshot ★★★

Label: Fantasy
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: NRG, North Hollywood
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitars), Hunter Perrin (guitar), Benmont Tench (keyboards), David Santos (bass), Kenny Aronoff (drums, perc), Julia Waters, Maxine Waters, Oren Waters (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 80; US 14

Released: SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

THE BLUE RIDGE RANGERS RIDES AGAIN

The one-man Rangers recruit some A-list outriders for another celebratory gallop through the bluegrass and folk country heartlands.

By Nigel Williamson

THERE comes a time in the life of every old rock'n'roller when the urge to put the band back together grows irresistible. No, not that band. Far easier to reassemble a group that never actually existed like the Blue Ridge Rangers, the mythical vehicle for John Fogerty's first post-Creedence solo outing – on which he played and sung every note.

By 2008, when he began planning a belated follow-up to 1973's collection of country covers and rootsy remakes, Fogerty's stop-start career was in one of its forward- moving phases. *Revival* had just given him his highest-charting album since 1985 and had been nominated for a Grammy as best rock album. Life was good. As he told *Billboard*, he was finally "feeling comfortable in my own skin".

The suggestion to take the Rangers out for another ride came from his wife Julie. "It was like a wife telling her husband, 'Why don't you go fishing?' So I jumped in with both feet," he said.

The timing was propitious, too. Not only was Fogerty in a mellow mood but much had changed since the first Blue Ridge Rangers outing, not least the explosion of interest in what had come to be known as Americana.

Although he claimed a follow-up had never been far from his mind and at various times he'd even made lists of suitable songs, it was also Julie, who was credited as the album's executive producer, who suggested much of the repertoire.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"Fogerty's original Blue Ridge Rangers outing was a self-played set of earthy gospel and country covers. Emphasising the more polished nature of this sequel, an all-star band of session musicians accompany him... It's a sincere but over-comfortable trawl – lovers of the man's rockin' fire will be disappointed."

GAVIN MARTIN, UNCUT, 10/2009

There was one major difference from the first album, for this time around Fogerty was determined he wasn't going to be the Lone Ranger. Ever since he'd cut the original album, he'd regretted not making it a more collaborative effort and so he summoned a crack crew from the cream of LA and Nashville sessioners and enrolled Lenny Waronker as associate producer and Stones/Bowie/Springsteen mixer Bob Clearmountain as his engineer.

Those riding with him included Emmylou Harris's sometime guitarist Buddy Miller, the much-travelled Greg Leisz on pedal steel, dobro and mandolin, drummer Kenny Aronoff, who made his name in John Mellencamp's band and had played on Fogerty's three previous solo albums, and country-rock pioneer and former Gram Parsons sideman Herb Pedersen on harmony vocals.

Then Julie told him he should cover Ricky Nelson's "Garden Party" with the Eagles. "I said, 'Sure, honey,' like it was a Saturday-morning chore. It was an audacious idea, so far from my perception," he admitted. But he approached Don Henley, who said yes and brought Timothy B Schmit with him.

Next she nagged him to call Springsteen and ask him to duet on "When Will I Be Loved". The Boss was in the middle of what he described as "the busiest month of my life", performing at the Super Bowl and President Obama's 'We Are One' concert, releasing *Working On A Dream* and rehearsing for a world tour. But he said yes and invited Fogerty to New Jersey to record.

Most of the album, however, was laid down in a 10-day session in Santa Monica, working from a long list of 40 songs which the Fogertys put together with Waronker and T-Bone Burnett. "I did it without concern for commerce, hipness, any practical reasons," Fogerty said. "It's stuff I love. I chose to honour this music because it makes me smile."

The dozen songs that made the cut mixed the familiar and the obscure, and Fogerty even covered himself with a rootsy version of "Change In The Weather", which had first appeared in harder, swamp-rocking livery on 1986's *Eye Of The Zombie*.

The opener, "Paradise", first appeared on John Prine's debut album in 1971, and you can her the relish with which Fogerty sings, "*Sometimes we'd travel right down the Green River*", with its echo of one of his own greatest songs. It's delivered as a relaxed bluegrass romp with dobro, mandolin and fiddle but lacks the wistfulness of Prine's original.

"Never Ending Song of Love", recorded contrastingly by Delaney & Bonnie and The New Seekers in 1971, is also given a bluegrass-lite treatment, with even a "*yahoo*" or two thrown in, but it ends up sounding twee.

More satisfying is "Garden Party". Fogerty had inducted Ricky Nelson

posthumously into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, and his arrangement sticks closely to the singer's 1972 original. Lifted heavenwards by the blissed-out harmonies of Henley and Schmit, you can tell by the way he sings the repeated line "*You can't please everyone, so you got to please yourself*" how closely the sentiment resonates with him.

Buck Owens' "I Don't Care (Just As Long As You Love Me)" was an easy choice given that Fogerty had namechecked him in the lyrics of CCR's "Lookin' Out My Back Door". John Denver's schmaltzy "Back Home Again" was a less obvious selection but he just about gets away with it, singing in heart-on-sleeve manner to Julie on the other side of the studio glass.

THE shuffling honky-tonk tones of Ray Price's 1953 country hit "I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)" could easily have fitted on the first Rangers record, while the album's second dip into Price's songbook with "Fallin', Fallin', Fallin'" is delivered in western swing style.

If Fogerty singing Denver strained credibility, there's an even bigger surprise in his cover of Pat Boone's 1961 hit "Moody River". In fact, it's one of the album's highlights and reveals that beneath the stiff arrangement of Boone's bland

"I did it without any concern for commerce or hipness," Fogerty said. "It's stuff I love"

version lurked a magnificently dark country ballad of suicide and betrayal. He pulls off a similar rescue act on "Heaven's Just a Sin Away", a 1977 country No 1 for The Kendalls, while "Haunted House", a comic rockabilly number recorded by Johnny Miller in 1958, is a delightful novelty with fantastic guitar work by the unrelated Buddy Miller.

The album closes with Don Fogerty and Phil Springsteen ripping up the Everlys' carefully manicured harmonies on "When Will I Be Loved" and turning the song into a gruff-voiced roadhouse stomp. If you can find it, the video is a hoot, too, with Fogerty and band performing the song in an Old West saloon with a wanted poster bearing Springsteen's mug on the wall.

Compared to the first Rangers album more than a third of a century earlier, ...*Ride Again* is more of an easy-listening, MOR take, but it's undeniably fun, with the emphasis on the grinning as well as the picking. Contentment oozes from the record's every pore, but it never quite stumbles into the pitfall of complacency. CR

TRACKMARKS THE BLUE RIDGE RANGERS RIDES AGAIN

1. Paradise ★★★
2. Never Ending Song Of Love ★★
3. Garden Party ★★★★
4. I Don't Care (Just As Long As You Love Me) ★★★
5. Back Home Again ★★
6. I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me) ★★★
7. Change In The Weather ★★★★
8. Moody River ★★★★
9. Heaven's Just A Sin Away ★★★
10. Fallin', Fallin', Fallin' ★★★
11. Haunted House ★★★
12. When Will I Be Loved ★★★

Label: Fortunate Son/ Verve Forecast

Produced by: John Fogerty

Recorded at: Village Recorders and Berkeley Street Studios, Santa Monica

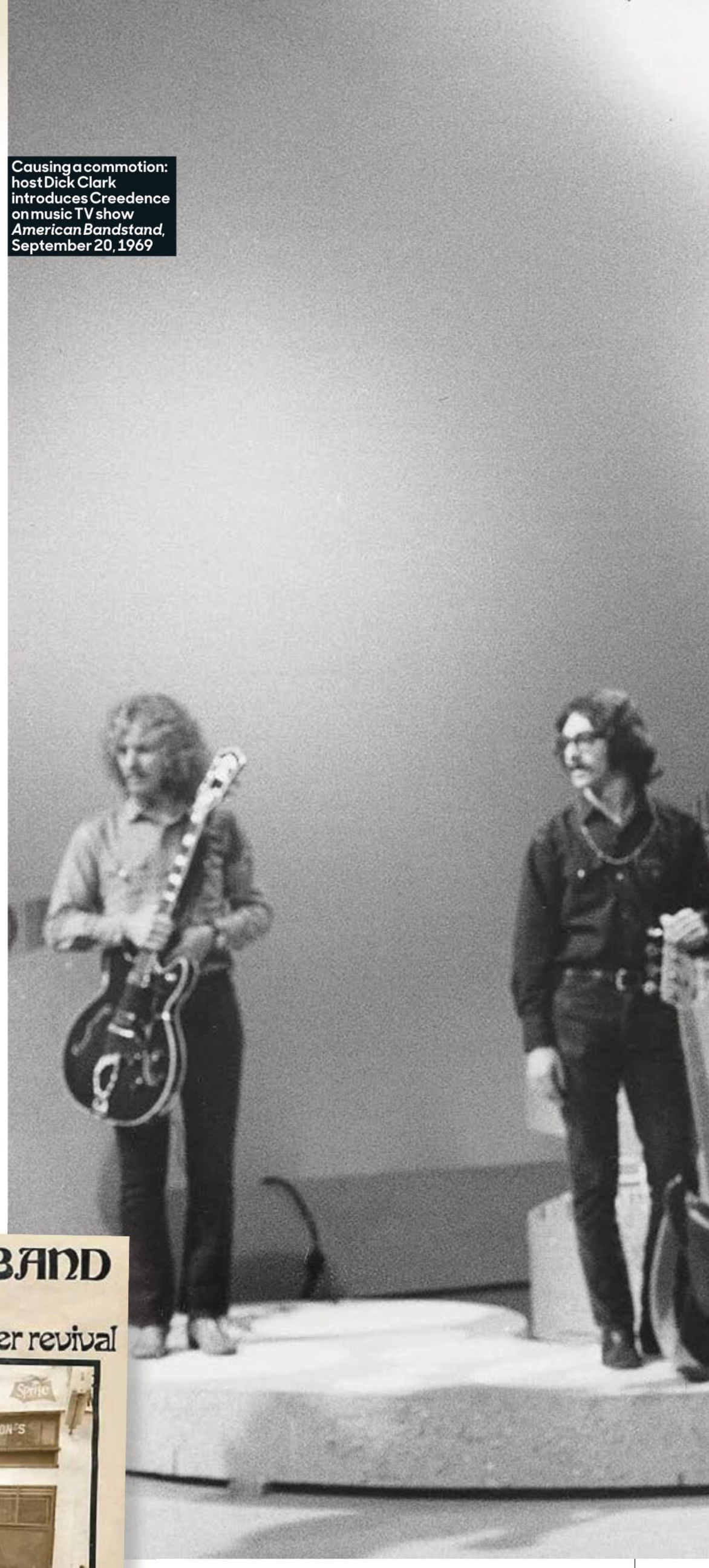
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitars), Jason Mowery (fiddle, dobro, mandolin), Buddy Miller (electric guitar), Greg Leisz (pedal steel), Hunter Perrin (guitar), Chris Chaney, Dennis Crouch (bass), Kenny Aronoff, Jay Bellerose (drums), Herb Pedersen, Jodie Kennedy (harmony vocals)

Highest chart position: UK 98; US 24

“I HAD SO MUCH ANGER, I COULDN’T PLAY THOSE SONGS…”

In 2012, *Uncut* meets *John Fogerty* as he attempts to make peace with his past, with an album of Creedence covers featuring celebrity guests. But if the music endures, so does the 40-year – chiefly business related – feud that provoked the demise of the band. “Look, we all made mistakes,” *Doug Clifford* tells *David Cavanagh* “It’s unfortunate, but the legacy of the music is still there, intact.”

No longer a prisoner of his own device?: John Fogerty at the Hard Rock Calling Festival, Hyde Park, London, July 14, 2012



Causing a commotion: host Dick Clark introduces Creedence on music TV show *American Bandstand*, September 20, 1969

UNCUT JULY 2012

BUILT in the Roaring Twenties, New York's Beacon Theatre is known as the 'older sister' of the famous Radio City Music Hall. The 30-foot Greek goddesses towering either side of the Beacon stage have witnessed everything from opera to a series of Allman Brothers concerts. Tonight, John Fogerty is playing the first of two shows in which he'll perform Creedence Clearwater Revival albums (*Cosmo's Factory* and, tomorrow, *Green River*) in their entirety. Both million-sellers, they contain eight classic singles between them.

For various reasons, Fogerty refused to play Creedence's music for almost 15 years after their 1972 break-up. He relented on a few occasions in 1986–7, following some gentle cajoling by Bob Dylan and George Harrison, but then came a typically Fogertyesque withdrawal – a gloomy, implacable silence – before his re-emergence in 1997 with *Blue Moon Swamp*. He officially began reintroducing Creedence songs into his sets that year.

Fogerty acknowledges the burden of engaging with the music (and, perhaps, demons) of his past. He compares it to the Eagles reuniting for their Hell Freezes Over tour. "Yes, there were long, dark times," he tells *Uncut*. "I was miserable. I stopped playing guitar. I was a bitter person." Claiming to be free of his grudges, Fogerty – whose dyed hair makes him appear younger than his 66 years – is animated on stage. His voice remains one of the most rip-roaring of rock'n'roll instruments, seeming to come with its own slapback echo. "This [*Cosmo's Factory*] was an important record in the days when they still had vinyl," he winks to the Beacon audience, "when people had Grateful Dead hairdos and smoked Jefferson Airplane cigarettes."

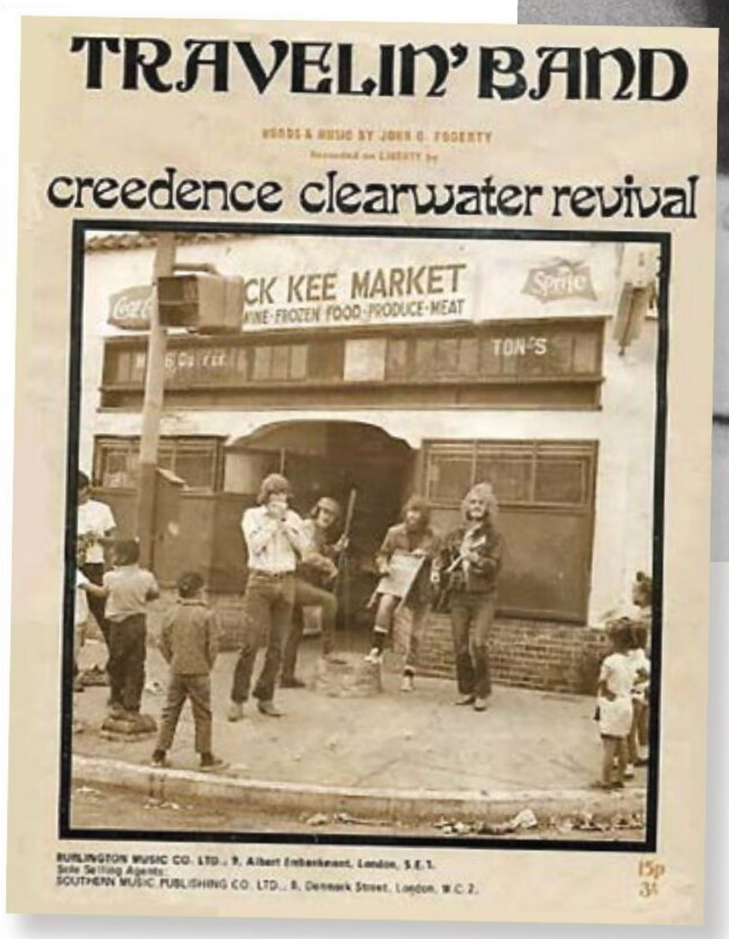
The third song he plays is "Travelin' Band", a worldwide hit in 1970, which Fogerty wrote as an homage to Little Richard, a boyhood hero. But his tone turns sarcastic as he informs the crowd: "Of course, before you know it, lawyers got involved and I was sued." The crowd don't know what to say. Why has he mentioned a lawsuit? Why would someone sour the atmosphere of their own gig?

They might if they were John Fogerty.

CREEDENCE Clearwater Revival were an American phenomenon. From 1968 to 1972, they dominated FM and AM radio alike – an unusual feat – with a prolific run of glorious singles ("Suzie Q", "Proud Mary", "Bad Moon Rising", "Green River", "Fortunate Son", "Up Around The Bend"). In 1969 alone, they earned three platinum discs and released three acclaimed albums (*Bayou Country*, *Green River*, *Willy And The Poor Boys*), as well as playing Woodstock and most major festivals. By late '69, Creedence could have called themselves the biggest band in America. By mid-1970, they could have widened the parameters to 'biggest band in the world', since The Beatles, their only real competition in sales terms, no longer existed.

"Creedence took America by storm," says Jake Rohrer, their former press officer and tour manager. "They had the broadest demographic imaginable. At Creedence concerts you'd see pre-teens, grandparents and literally every age group in between." Some of their most enthusiastic fanmail came from US soldiers stationed in Vietnam, and inmates of federal prisons back home. "Creedence didn't bring anything new to the culture," Rohrer clarifies. "What they did was remind Americans from whence they'd come. Their lyrics were just so American."

Creedence's art was neither cosmic nor complex. Their grooves were smooth and warm, with steady, hypnotic momentum from Tom Fogerty's rhythm guitar and a Memphis-like sense of economy. Paradoxically, their songs were haunted by anxiety and premonitions – malevolent moons and Biblical rainfall – like those from a Calvinist preacher crossed with a pessimistic meteorologist. Writing while bodies fell in a faraway war, John Fogerty composed allegories for a conflict which he emotionally opposed, but which, all the same, he could easily have joined. Some Creedence songs exchanged voodoo for parable, portraying a folkloric South of bayous, railroad stowaways ("flatcar riders") and old-time courtesies. In Fogerty's dual America, the bonfires of protest raged on the White House lawn ("Effigy"), but the people on the river were happy to share food with strangers ("Proud Mary"). "Creedence made music for all the waylaid Tom Sawyers and Huck Finns," pronounced Bruce Springsteen, inducting them into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1993, "and for the world that would never be able to take them up on their most simple and eloquent invitation, which is: 'If you get lost, come on home to Green River.'"



FOGERTY'S post-Creedence depression in the '80s had nothing to do with music. Mired in contractual disputes about royalties and publishing, he gradually lost his taste for the songs that the rest of the world loved.

"I had so much anger," he says of his long spell in the wilderness. "I was afraid that I'd start singing 'Proud Mary' and go off on a tirade. If one of my songs came on the car radio, I'd change the station. That's why I couldn't play those songs. I didn't want that person standing in front of an audience."

Does time heal all wounds? Intriguing comments by Fogerty last July suggested he

WALT DISNEY TELEVISION VIA GETTY IMAGES/PHOTO ARCHIVES/WALT DISNEY TELEVISION VIA GETTY IMAGES

would now be interested in a Creedence reunion. They last played together in 1983 (at a private party) and Fogerty explains that while he's "not actively making overtures" to tour with them again, he'd be willing to listen to proposals. *Uncut* telephones Fogerty's ex-colleagues to get their reactions. "Leopards don't change their spots," says an unimpressed Stu Cook (bass). "This is just an image-polishing exercise by John. My phone certainly hasn't rung."

"It might have been a nice idea 20 years ago, but it's too late," shrugs Doug Clifford (drums), who plays alongside Cook in Creedence Clearwater Revisited, a five-piece 'reincarnation' of CCR. Clifford adds: "I prefer the band I'm in now. We play Creedence better than Fogerty does."

The three old friends and comrades, sad to say, have become used to aiming their remarks at the jugular.

"IF ONE OF MY SONGS CAME ON THE CAR RADIO, I'D CHANGE THE STATION"

John Fogerty

IN one of his greatest songs, "Born On The Bayou", John Fogerty sang nostalgically of the places where he'd grown up. He recalled the hound dog in the Louisiana backwoods; the Cajun Queen; the freight train "chooglin'" past on its way to New Orleans. There was just one thing. "Born On The Bayou" was complete fiction. It bore absolutely no resemblance to Fogerty's childhood. Like all the members of Creedence, he hailed from the Northern Californian town of El Cerrito, nestled between Berkeley and Richmond, with pleasant views of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge for the families who could afford a house on the hill.

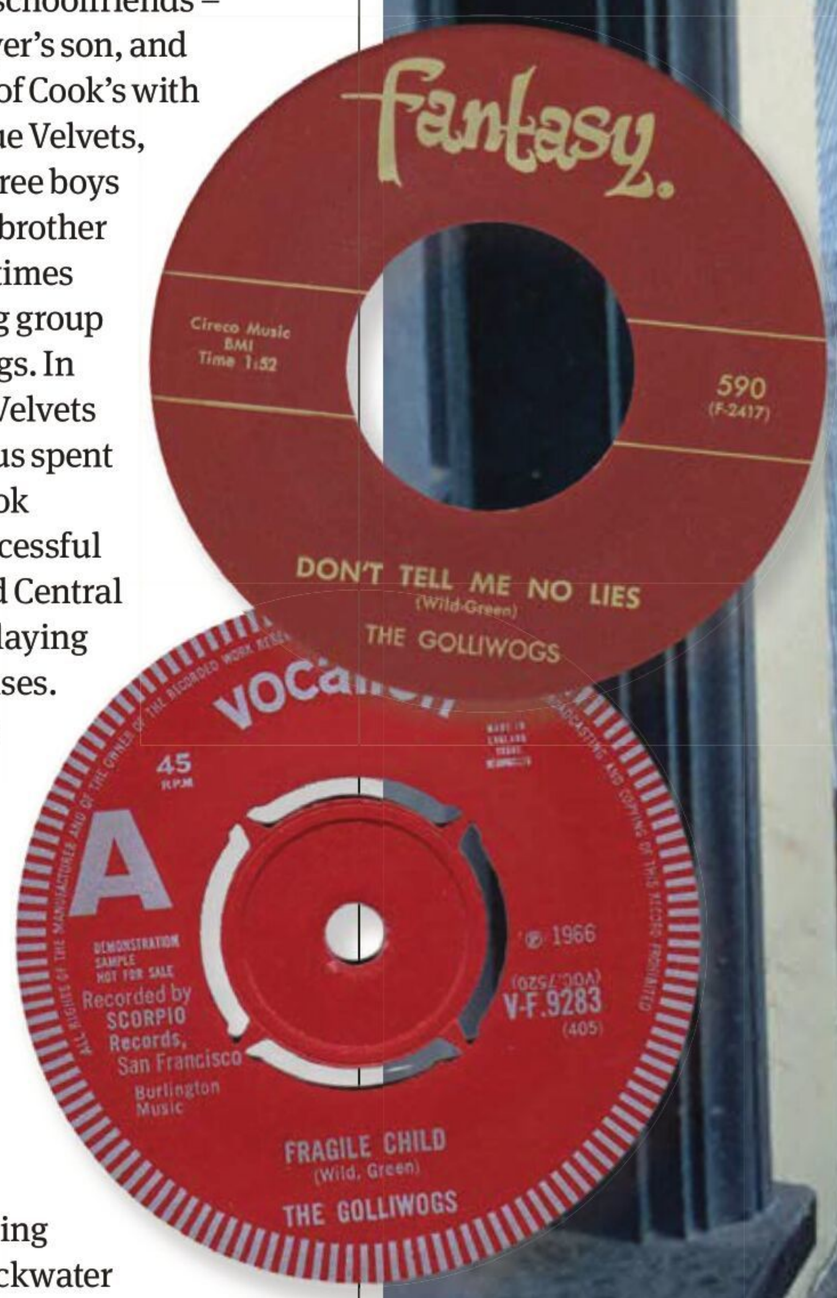
Fogerty was something of an anachronism. A serious, introverted boy, he grew up with a fondness for Uncle Remus stories and Disney's *Song Of The South*, absorbing by osmosis a language of riverboats and catfish. Just like his ➤

contemporary Robbie Robertson (a Canadian), Fogerty would find his songwriter's voice in the lexicon of the Southern states. "Let's go all the way back," he smiles. "Brer Rabbit. The Tar Baby. 'Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah'. I found those things fascinating. Perhaps I identified with them more than kids who actually grew up in the South. I took note of them because they were so foreign to the place where I grew up."

One of Fogerty's favourite movies was *Swamp Water* (1941), directed by the émigré Frenchman Jean Renoir. Filmed on location in Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp, it used real alligators and snakes and featured a spine-chilling shot of a human skull, balanced on a crucifix made of tree branches, grinning evilly above the foul water. Fogerty must have seen *Swamp Water* at an impressionable age. "Walter Brennan plays a guy living in the swamp," he enthuses. "Dana Andrews is a government revenue guy trying to catch moonshiners – people making illegal booze – so he's the enemy. But then Dana gets bitten by a snake, and Walter's running around saying, 'Cottonmouth bit! Cottonmouth bit!' He nurses him back to health, but Dana goes delirious for a while and we see all these weird images. It's a swampy, scary-looking movie and I was just fascinated by it."

It was Bo Diddley's "Who Do You Love?" that opened Fogerty's eyes to "the darkness and spookiness" that could inhabit rock'n'roll. Along with a lifelong passion for echo-drenched Sun 45s, Diddley's voodoo-steeped universe was a key influence on Fogerty's thinking. "How can you not be inspired by a song about a guy wearing a cobra snake for a necktie?" he asks rhetorically. "And I liked anything to do with 'gumbo' and 'Little John the conqueroo' and 'putting a spell' on somebody – those things seemed way cool."

In 1959, Fogerty and two schoolfriends – Stu Cook, a well-to-do lawyer's son, and Doug Clifford, a classmate of Cook's with a drumkit – formed The Blue Velvets, an instrumental trio. All three boys were 14. John's 18-year-old brother Tom, a singer, would sometimes borrow them as his backing group for gigs and demo recordings. In 1963, Tom joined The Blue Velvets permanently. "The four of us spent the next few years," Stu Cook recalls, "putting out unsuccessful records and touring around Central and Northern California, playing little towns and military bases. We had a variety of names: The Visions, Tommy Fogerty & The Blue Velvets, The Golliwogs. We put out half a dozen singles on the Scorpio label, a subsidiary of Fantasy. They got airplay in towns like San Jose, Lodi, Merced, all the little stations in Central Valley." The idea of a musician playing out his days in one such backwater ("*Oh Lord, stuck in Lodi again*") would inform the *Green River* album's poignant song "Lodi". Doug Clifford remembers Lodi as "a small



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

The former Blue Velvets, remade as CCR through John's fascination with the "darkness and spookiness" that could haunt '50s rock'n'roll

agricultural town with a seedy bar full of drunk farmhands and not a woman in the place".

It had been Tom, not John, who led the charge in the band's formative days, encouraging the younger lads to think of music as a viable career. Without his energy, they might have got nowhere. But it would be John who took over as singer, writer, leader and – ultimately – visionary as the years rolled by. A symbolic sibling shift took place, unspoken, for the benefit of all.

THE Golliwogs was a gimmicky British Invasion name foisted on them by Fantasy Records. The band hated it, mumbling into their collars when people asked them what they were called. Meanwhile, a more worrying matter presented itself. In late '66, John Fogerty and Doug Clifford were drafted. Fogerty was placed in the reserve force. "I had a six-month active duty, plus a long period when I would do a whole weekend once a month, and every summer I'd do two weeks. And all that time I had the fear, at any moment, of being activated and sent to Vietnam."

Clifford had an even narrower escape. "I was two weeks away from being transferred to the army and sent to Vietnam," he confirms. "I even had the piece of paper in my hand, telling me where I'd be going." Clifford calls it "the destiny of Creedence". He says quietly, "Fifty-eight thousand Americans were killed out there, and hundreds of thousands were wounded, and John and I could have been among them."

The Golliwogs re-signed with Fantasy – now run by new owner Saul Zaentz – in late '67 and changed their name to Creedence Clearwater Revival. The three words came from different sources. Creedence was the Christian name of a friend of someone that Tom Fogerty knew. Clearwater was taken from a beer commercial. Revival (which they liked to say was the most salient part of the name) signified a rebooting of their youthful ambitions and a return to '50s rock'n'roll values. "I didn't like the idea of those acid-rock, 45-minute guitar solos," says John Fogerty today. "I thought music should get to the point a little more quickly than that. I was a mainstream rock'n'roll kid, and I also had a country blues ethic. Lead Belly was a big influence. I learned about him through Pete Seeger. When you listen to those guys, you're getting down to the root of the tree."

Despite the constant threat of John or Doug being suddenly dispatched to Vietnam, there was a growing feeling in the Bay Area that Creedence had a promising future. Promoter Bill Graham expressed interest in managing them. "They'd play Winterland and the Fillmore West, third on the bill, and blow everyone off the stage," declares Jake Rohrer. Fantasy were confident, too. "We sat in Saul Zaentz's kitchen," recalls Cook, "and he told us, 'When you guys are successful, we'll tear up this contract and give you a real deal.'" Cook sighs. "We kept our side of the bargain. He didn't."

Their 1968 debut album, *Creedence Clearwater Revival*, was a modest seller at first. Its standout track was "Suzie Q", an eight-minute version of a 1957 hit by Louisiana rocker Dale Hawkins. For all his scepticism about long solos, Fogerty stretched out penetratingly on guitar while Creedence's rhythm trio laid down a sublime slow boogie. An edited version, issued by Fantasy as a single, was picked up by AM radio and reached No 11 in the charts. Nine years into their career, Creedence were finally a smash. That summer, on the day that he received his discharge papers from the army, Fogerty wrote a song about a man shaking off the pressures of the city and finding harmony on the river. Fogerty called it "Proud Mary".

THE first of Creedence's true monster hits, "Proud Mary" would have topped the American charts if 1969 hadn't been the annus mirabilis of bubblegum pop. As it was, Tommy Roe's infernally catchy "Dizzy" kept Creedence at No 2, but "Proud Mary", later covered by Ike & Tina Turner, Elvis Presley and a couple of hundred thousand bar bands, was already on its way to being established as a landmark in rock'n'roll. "Bad Moon Rising", another million-seller, followed it to US No 2. As soon as the bad moon began to wane, it was promptly replaced in the charts by "Green River", which sat (once again) at No 2 behind The Archies' "Sugar Sugar" – another bubblegum behemoth – in September.

"LEAD BELLY WAS A BIG INFLUENCE. I LEARNED ABOUT HIM THROUGH PETE SEEGER"

John Fogerty

"We worked on a 12-week cycle," explains Clifford. "John's theory was that if we ever went out of the charts, our career would be over and we'd be forgotten. None of our peers thought that way. It put a lot of pressure on John. A lot of pressure on all of us." Talking to Fogerty now, he gives every indication that the pressure stimulated him immensely. In 1969–70 he was arguably America's most socio-politically significant songwriter since Dylan. Ask Fogerty about any song's origins and he quickly applies his answer to the context of the times. "Effigy" (on *Willy And The Poor Boys*) was his response to President Nixon emerging from the White House one afternoon and sneering at the anti-war demonstrators outside. ("He said, 'Nothing you do here today will have any effect on me. I'm going back inside to watch the football game.'") "Fortunate Son", angry and indignant, was an attack on the iniquities of the draft system, which saw rich men calling in favours to help their sons avoid the Vietnam bombs and bullets. "Run Through The Jungle" warns of a different kind of arms proliferation – this time at home – though its gun control message, couched in metaphor like most Fogerty songs, didn't stop it being adopted as an anthem by US troops in the Vietnam jungles. Fogerty wrote the bulk of Creedence's *Bayou Country* album, meanwhile, while a muted TV in the corner of his room showed horrified reactions to the

assassination of Bobby Kennedy in June 1968.

"I would sit in my little apartment – which was very sparse – and stare at the wall. That's how I wrote. I would stare at it all night. There was nothing hanging on the wall, because I didn't have any money for paintings. It was just a beige wall. It was a blank slate, a blank canvas. But it was also exciting. I could go anywhere and do anything, because I was a writer. I was conjuring that place deep in my soul that was me."

A loner who rarely socialised, Fogerty put Creedence through their paces as musicians. They rehearsed doggedly until songs' arrangements were inch-perfect, enabling them to record whole albums in a matter of days. The emphasis was on being well drilled, well prepared, almost like the army that Fogerty had recently left. Creedence had a 'no alcohol' rule in their dressing room. They disdained the drug culture. "The San Francisco bands called us boy scouts because we didn't get high and we were all married with families," laughs Clifford.

Fogerty's natural discipline (and self-confessed fear of LSD) made him a Roy Keane in an era of Balotellis. "At a time when rock'n'rollers were developing increasingly flamboyant looks," relates Russ Gary, a recording engineer on several Creedence albums, "Fogerty, in his simple jeans and flannel shirt, came across as more of a shaggy haired workingman than a rock star. But even just standing around, he gave off an intensity that drew your eye to him."

As they travelled around the country, Creedence were thrilled to be embraced in Louisiana and Georgia, where they'd been somewhat nervous about playing. Cook: "We were celebrating their culture and they liked us. The real disconnect was that they thought we were from the South. When they found out we were from California, they scratched their heads." Jake Rohrer: "I remember Duck Dunn of Booker T & The MG's telling me that when he found out the guys who'd done 'Born On The Bayou' were from Berkeley, he was going to go and burn all his Creedence records." In the event, Creedence and The MG's became friends and later toured together.

In the studio, Creedence shunned the psychedelic effects that other bands relied on, and instead used slapback echo to get the sounds of the mid-'50s Sun singles that John Fogerty adored. "I was greatly influenced by the early records of Elvis Presley and I just thought that was the way that music should sound," he says. "I also loved Carl Perkins' great records from that era. And also Roy Orbison's 'Ooby Dooby' [*which Creedence covered in 1970*] and 'Go Go Go'."

Fogerty would never outgrow the traditions and protocols of the '50s. His aim was to make music that sounded great coming out of a radio, not music that hippies could trip out to on headphones. "This statement holds true for everybody in Creedence: simple is better, less is more," Fogerty says. "But even though it's simple rock'n'roll, everybody will have a certain role within the framework. Tom's guitar-playing may just sound like a guy in a garage strumming away, but it's awfully specific." Cook adds: "People called it swamp-rock. We never called it that. We just called it rock'n'roll."

Green River is Fogerty's favourite Creedence album. The second of the three albums they released during 1969 (an amazing statistic which was matched by Fairport Convention in Britain), *Green River* was, says Fogerty, "something that I'd been carrying all of my life. Musically, *Green River* was everything that I was about. I really enjoyed making it. I was really focused with the arrangements, the rehearsals, the necessities for each song.

"The inspiration for 'Bad Moon Rising' was an old movie called *The Devil And Daniel Webster*. It's an old tale about the Devil seducing some poor guy who's wishing for a better life. In steps the Devil: 'I can promise you untold success and wealth.' 'You can?' 'Yes. All you have to do is give me your soul.' The movie made a big impression on me – especially a scene where there's a hurricane during the night and the guy is cowering in his barn. The next morning he opens the door and it's a beautiful sunny day. He looks over and sees his neighbour's field trounced to the ground by the hailstorm, but his own crops are standing straight up.

"That was a very powerful image to me. That was my inspiration for 'Bad Moon Rising'. I saw the movie again recently and the scene was so subtle, and so hard to hear, that it's a wonder I got any inspiration from it. I guess in the old days movies were more subtle."

Creedence made a rare foray outside America in 1970, flying to Europe and headlining the Royal Albert Hall. Jake Rohrer remembers arriving in West Germany "and finding we were bigger than The Beatles". *Cosmo's Factory*, released in July, was their fifth album in two years. Its title was a reference to the band's Berkeley office space (The Factory) and also to their gregarious drummer Clifford (whose longtime nickname was 'Cosmo'). The album's front cover showed the four of them caught by a camera in an off-duty moment, a proudly uncool quartet who looked more like lumberjacks than rock stars. The album was enormous and the hit singles kept coming.

Slap happy: Tom Fogerty and Doug Clifford on London's Southbank with Saul Zaentz (in glasses), April 1970

MIKE RANDOLPH/PAUL POPPER/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

The bizarre case of "The Old Man Down The Road", when John Fogerty became the only major artist to be sued for self-plagiarism...

JOHN FOGERTY'S *Centerfield* (1985) reached No 1 in America, but was also highly controversial. Two songs, "Zanz Kant Danz" and "Mr Greed", appeared to be personal attacks on Saul Zaentz, owner of Fantasy Records, Creedence Clearwater Revival's former label. Zaentz complained that the songs' lyrics made him out to be "a thief, robber, adulterer and murderer". Fogerty remixed "Zanz Kant Danz" and gave it a new title ("Vanz Kant Danz"), but Zaentz still sued for defamation, seeking $144 million in damages.

The issue was settled out of court, but in a surreal twist Zaentz launched a simultaneous suit claiming that another song on *Centerfield*, "The Old Man Down The Road" (a US Top 10 hit) had the same guitar riff as Fogerty's Creedence tune "Run Through The Jungle", to which Zaentz owned the copyright. Fogerty was being sued, in effect, for illegally plagiarising his own music. "[*The case*] marks a high point of absurdity in the history of music and the legal system that will probably never be surpassed," wrote Creedence's biographer Craig Werner in 1998.

The case went to trial in 1988. Fogerty brought his guitar to the witness stand. "What is a musical riff?" the cross-examining attorney asked. Fogerty replied: "I'm not sure I can answer that. A short series of musical events." Attorney: "Are they related in some way?" Fogerty: "Are who related?" Attorney: "What about 'Old Man...'?" Fogerty: "What about it?" Attorney: "Does it sound like Creedence music?" Fogerty: "It sounds like swamp music."

In the end, Fogerty was able to convince the jury that "The Old Man Down The Road" and "Run Through The Jungle" were two distinct compositions. The trial, however, intensified his animosity towards Stu Cook and Doug Clifford, whom he accused of declining to speak on his behalf. Cook and Clifford retorted that they were never asked. In 1997 Fogerty sued Cook and Clifford to try to prevent them using the name Creedence Clearwater Revisited, but was unsuccessful.

"Suddenly everyone wanted to be a general": trouble ahead for Creedence in 1970

Cosmo's Factory had six of them. While San Francisco longhairs across the bridge scoffed at their commercialism, Creedence henceforth made a point of releasing double A-sides. And invariably both songs would have an uncanny knack of cutting through the weasel words and speaking directly to all sections of the population.

Clifford: "'Fortunate Son' and 'Who'll Stop The Rain' – which was about Nixon – were very powerful messages. Some of the other bands on the political left were writing stuff like 'fuck the pigs', but who's going to listen to something like that except the hardcore freaks? To be able to spread a message to a divided country, so that both sides heard it – and to do it poetically and descriptively – that's where the power of John's songs lay. We reached the masses with strong messages and feelgood music, and that really was our greatest achievement."

In the autumn of 1970, Creedence were on top of the world. Nobody could have foreseen what would happen next. Having captured America's hearts and minds, the four men somehow found a way to implode – with toxic effects on long-held friendships and a relationship between two brothers. It was to be the most acrimonious and protracted divorce that rock'n'roll has ever known.

"WE WERE TIED TO THE WORST CONTRACT SIGNED BY ANY BAND IN HISTORY"

Stu Cook

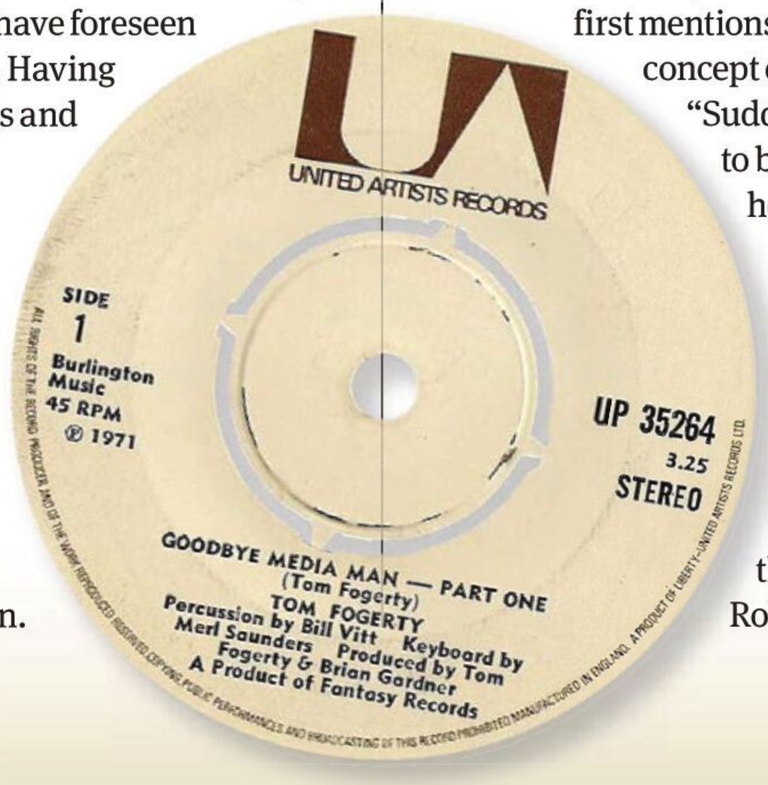
IT began, John Fogerty recalls, with a band meeting. That in itself was odd. Creedence didn't have band meetings. Creedence was a benevolent dictatorship in which the will of the rhythm section yielded to the decree of the flannel-shirted leader. Ever since "Proud Mary", the system had worked with spectacular results. Fogerty was therefore irritated and nonplussed, towards the end of 1970, to be confronted with the first mentions of an unwelcome concept called democracy.

"Suddenly everybody wanted to be a general," he says ironically.

Part of the problem was that Creedence, even at their height of their fame, were a remarkably small operation. They travelled with two or three roadies, plus Rohrer, and that was it. They had no manager, no booking agent, no PR firm, no entourage. They were the equivalent of a small family firm that accidentally creates a brand name as marketable as Coca-Cola. "John was our manager," Clifford groans. "Bad idea. He had no concept of the business side. Zero. None. Nada." Stu Cook, who has a business degree from San Jose State University, gives a withering assessment of Fogerty's managerial shortcomings.

"He condemned us to a career that effectively never became professional. Doug and I call it El Cerrito Syndrome. We were always limited by John's vision of how a band is supposed to be run. We were tied – and we're still tied to this day – to the worst contract signed by any band in history. We said to John, 'Look, you didn't get us a new contract with Fantasy like you were supposed to do, like you said you'd do. You're not qualified to be the manager. We're the number-one band in the world and we deserve a real manager.' So what does John do, in an act of what I can only describe as brutal cynicism? He brings us Allen Klein."

Klein was sent packing after one meeting and Fogerty resumed management of Creedence. A contract renegotiation was put on the table, but it would drag on for a year, complicated by Saul Zaentz's offer of a percentage in Fantasy as a sweetener. Cook describes the percentage as "huge". Clifford calculates it as "monumental". Fogerty disputes their accounts, arguing that the percentage was minuscule and that only a pair of idiots would think otherwise. Cook counters



GAB ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

that Fogerty was a novice at reading contracts and should have asked a lawyer to help him understand it. Fogerty refused to sign the contract. Cook and Clifford claim that his intransigence cost them tens of millions of dollars.

IF the restrictive clauses and meagre royalties of Creedence's 1967 contract have denied Cook and Clifford the earnings they feel entitled to – well, that could be termed a 'professional' grievance. But so much of Creedence's disintegration is personal. Fogerty's stranglehold over their affairs was challenged, crucially, by his brother Tom, who had grown resentful of John's refusal to allow him a more prominent role. "Tom had put up with a lot of shit from John," remarks Clifford, Tom's closest ally in the group. "I think Tom was expecting John to say, 'OK, now we've achieved our goals, why don't you start singing a few of the songs?' Tom had a great voice, kinda like Ritchie Valens. Tom would have done a damn good job on 'La Bamba'. But John didn't want him to sing it, in case we had a hit with it. He didn't want Tom to succeed." John insists he simply didn't want to mess with a successful formula.

"TOM WOULD'VE DONE A FINE JOB ON 'LA BAMBA'. BUT JOHN DIDN'T WANT HIM TO SING IT"

Doug Clifford

Creedence's sixth album, *Pendulum*, had a fuller-sounding production than its predecessors, and had been a long time in the works while John overdubbed keyboards and saxophones. Engineer Russ Gary remembers that Cook, Clifford and Tom Fogerty were only in the studio for "two or three days at the most". *Pendulum* was launched to the media with an expensive PR event to which 200 journalists were invited – a very un-Creedence-like evening which John maintains he attended under protest. The party had been Tom's idea.

Tom, nevertheless, left Creedence in early 1971 to begin a solo career. The others considered asking Duck Dunn to join, before deciding to continue as a trio. The bombshell lay just around the

Dimple pleasures: (l-r) Stu, Doug and John in a pub ahead of their concert at the Manchester Free Trade Hall, September 1, 1971

MIKE RANDOLPH/PAUL POPPER/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

corner. Forty years later, the accusations are so vehement on both sides that it's impossible to know who to believe. Fogerty complains that Cook and Clifford concocted a false story about him giving them a bizarre ultimatum in a limousine after a concert in San Diego. Cook and Clifford are adamant that the ultimatum (and the limo) were real. Fogerty says that Cook and Clifford demanded to write and sing a third of the next album each, or they'd leave. Cook and Clifford reject this completely, alleging that Fogerty threatened to leave if they didn't write and sing a third of the next album each. It seems a shocking allegation for them to make, because it implies that Fogerty would intentionally sabotage an album – not to mention tarnish Creedence's legacy – in order to make his two bandmates look inadequate.

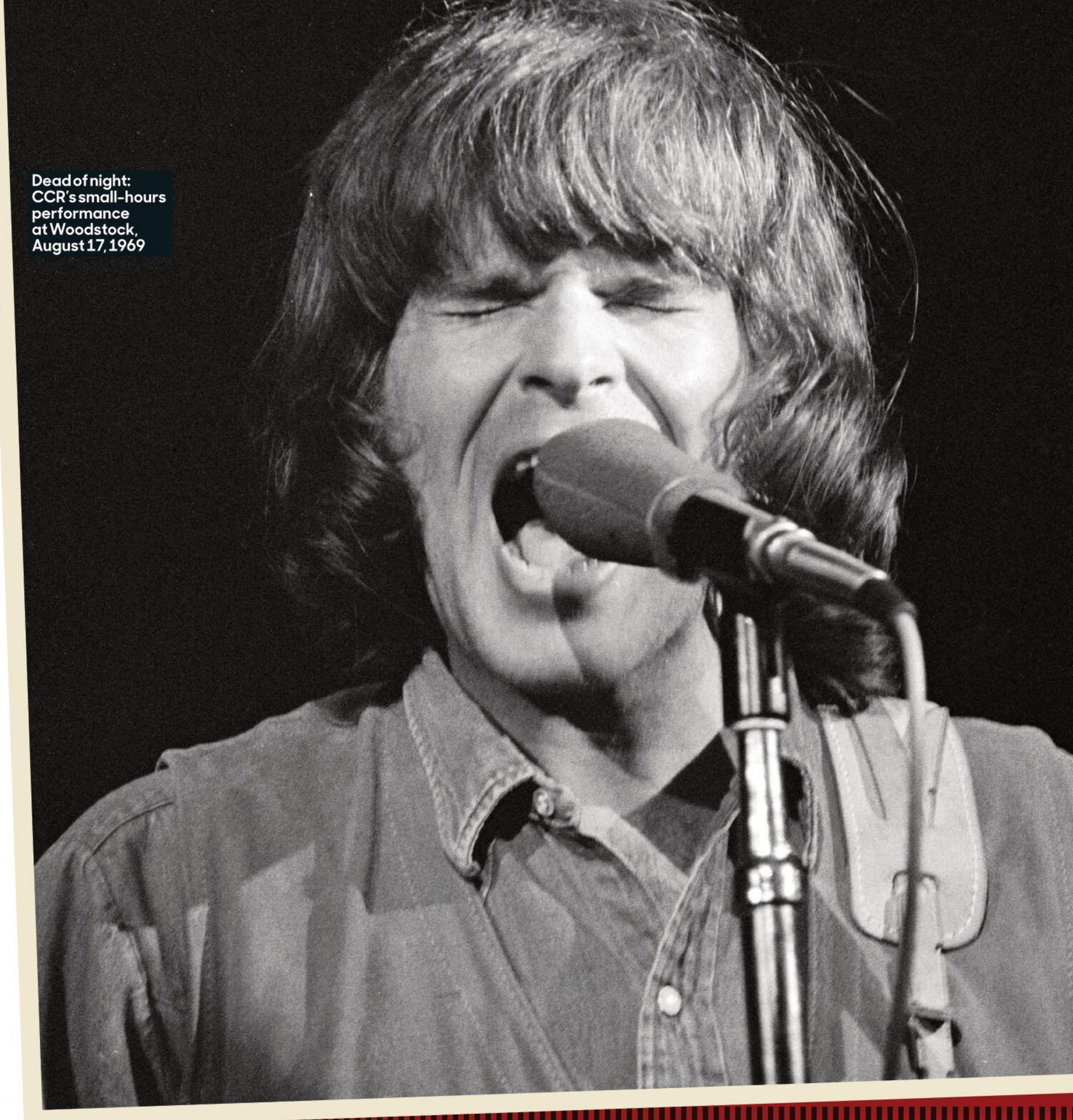
"John wanted out," says Clifford with contempt, "but first he wanted to punish us for supporting Tom. He was cutting his nose off to spite his face. That's the way John Fogerty does things. Stu and I wanted some input, but the last thing we wanted to do was sing. But, anyway, we wrote and sang three songs, and of course the album was doomed to fail. John told the press that we'd put a gun to his head, but it was quite the opposite. It was a cruel lie."

Mardi Gras (1971), one of the most scathingly reviewed albums ever, was the last record Creedence would ever make.

"I had a pretty good idea that the album would be dreadful," says Fogerty, who blames Cook and Clifford for forcing their songs on him. "I'd known these guys since high school and I figured I had a good handle on their abilities. The phrase I kept repeating to myself was, 'I guess they deserve a shot.' But I was dreading the results. Jon Landau in *Rolling Stone* called it the worst album he'd ever heard. And I agreed. The other guys didn't. They thought the album was really cool." He laughs. "They changed their tune later."

Creedence split in 1972. Fogerty released *The Blue Ridge Rangers* in 1973, a country-bluegrass album on which he played all the instruments himself. In the years following Creedence's demise, the real poison seeped in. Cook and Clifford became convinced that Fogerty's mismanagement of the band's affairs had got them into trouble with the IRS. In the meantime, the bandmembers had lost millions in an offshore banking scheme that turned out to be a swindle. "The full picture slowly unfolded," says Cook, "that not only were we broke but we were also in trouble with the authorities. We found out more and more of what had actually gone on in John's negotiations with Fantasy. More hard feelings developed. We got more and more isolated and estranged from John over the years."

FOGERTY'S solo career faltered in the mid-'70s. He stopped recording, angered by a clause in his Fantasy contract that seemed to demand greater and greater amounts of product as each year passed. Jake Rohrer, who worked for Fogerty until 1977, questions his interpretation of the wording. "I disagree with John's comment that the contract was a prison sentence. I personally thought that John wasted two decades of his ➤



Dead of night: CCR's small-hours performance at Woodstock, August 17, 1969

"WE SMOKED AT WOODSTOCK, BUT IT'S AMAZING HOW MANY PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WE WERE ONE OF THE HEADLINERS"

They came. They played. They disappeared from the final cut. Why CCR and other Woodstock acts didn't make it to the screen...

"AT Woodstock, I felt totally part of my generation," John Fogerty says. Strangely, though, not many people know that Creedence played Woodstock – because they don't appear in the movie or on the soundtrack album. They took the stage late on Saturday (Day Two) after a 95-minute set by the Grateful Dead. Fogerty, complaining that the audience was asleep, thought that Creedence played poorly and refused to allow their performance to be used. Other bands who performed but did not feature in the movie include:

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

Disenchanted with their own set, the Dead denied permission for it to be shown – though an interview with Jerry Garcia is seen in the film.

CANNED HEAT

Their 1968 hit "Going Up The Country" was featured in the film's opening credits, but Canned Heat didn't appear until the 1994 Director's Cut.

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

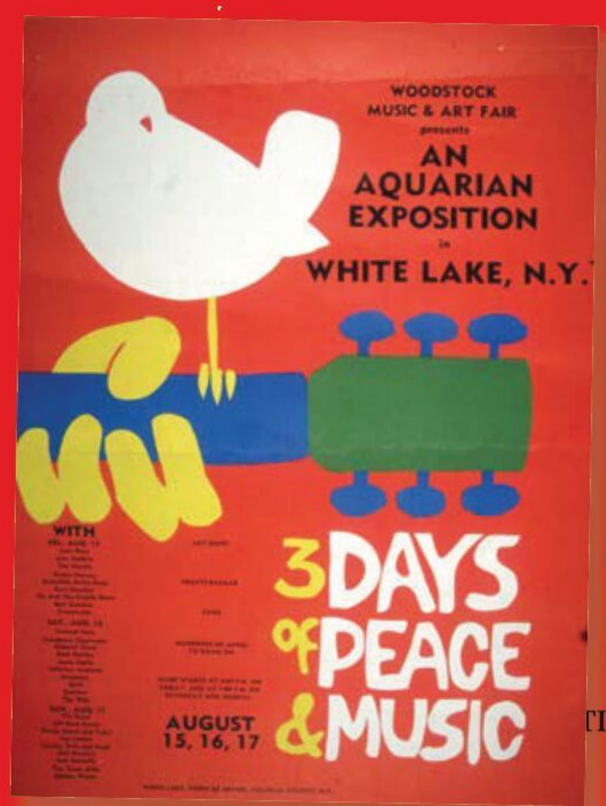
Headlined Day Two (by which time it was 8am on Day Three!), but only singer Grace Slick was seen in the original movie.

JANIS JOPLIN

Played at 2am on Day Three but was unhappy with her singing and is only seen walking to her dressing room in the movie.

THE BAND

Played at 10pm on Sunday (Day Three) but were absent from the movie owing to a dispute between their manager Albert Grossman and the filmmakers.



And more!

MOUNTAIN, THE INCREDIBLE STRING BAND, TIM HARDIN, JOHNNY WINTER, THE PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

life waging a war with Saul Zaentz." Either way, it became dangerous to mention Zaentz's name in Fogerty's presence during the '80s.

His 1985 comeback album for Warner Bros, *Centerfield*, railed at Zaentz on not one but two tracks ("Mr Greed", "Zanz Kant Danz"), to the disbelief of his former colleagues. "He even told Warners, 'I'll indemnify you against lawsuits'," says Doug Clifford. "He was still carrying all this crap from 15 years ago. He's free, he's won, he's on the biggest label in the world, but he can't get his foot out of the bucket of shit. So, of course, he gets sued."

In spite of their animosities, Creedence played together twice during that decade. Both were private occasions. First came Tom Fogerty's wedding in 1980. Then John Fogerty showed up at a 1983 high school reunion in El Cerrito and Creedence performed as The Blue Velvets, shaking a tail feather the way they'd done in 1959. But the problems between the Fogerty brothers remained unresolved. At some point in the '80s, Tom, who had undergone several operations on his back since 1974, caught Aids from an unscreened blood transfusion. By 1989, his illness was a matter of desperate concern. Tom had one last request. He wanted Creedence to play as a four-piece one more time, if only in his living room, before his inevitable return to hospital. John declined the request. "Finally," recalls Stu Cook, "when Tom couldn't even lift his arm properly because he was so weak, John said,

"The saddest chapter": John plays with Bruce Springsteen and Robbie Robertson during CCR's induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, 1993

'WE WERE BIGGER THAN THE BEATLES...'

Between 1968 and 1972, CCR sold over 30 million albums and singles in America alone. Just look at their stunning discography...

JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC, INC

1968

ALBUM
Creedence Clearwater Revival
JULY: (US sales platinum) US chart position 52

SINGLES
Porterville/Call It Pretending
JANUARY: debut single, didn't chart

Suzie Q Part I/Part Ii
JUNE: US chart position 11

I Put A Spell On You/ Walk On The Water
OCTOBER: Second cover released as a single, US chart position 58

1969

ALBUM
Bayou Country
JANUARY: (US sales platinum x2) US chart position 7; UK 62

SINGLES
Proud Mary/ Born On The Bayou
JANUARY: US chart position 2

ALBUM
Green River
AUGUST: (US sales platinum x3) US chart position 1; UK 20

SINGLES
Bad Moon Rising/Lodi
APRIL: US 2/52

Green River/Commotion
JULY: US 2/30

ALBUM
Willy And The Poor Boys
NOVEMBER: (US sales platinum x2) US chart position 3; UK 10

SINGLES
Down On The Corner/ Fortunate Son
OCTOBER: 3/14

1970

ALBUM
Cosmo's Factory
JULY 1970: (US sales platinum x4) US chart position 1; UK 1

SINGLES
Travelin' Band/Who'll Stop The Rain
JANUARY: US chart position 2

Run Through The Jungle/ Up Around The Bend
APRIL: US chart position 4

Lookin' Out My Back Door/ Long As I Can See The Light
JULY: US chart position 2

ALBUM
Pendulum
DECEMBER: (US sales platinum) US chart position 5; UK 8

1971

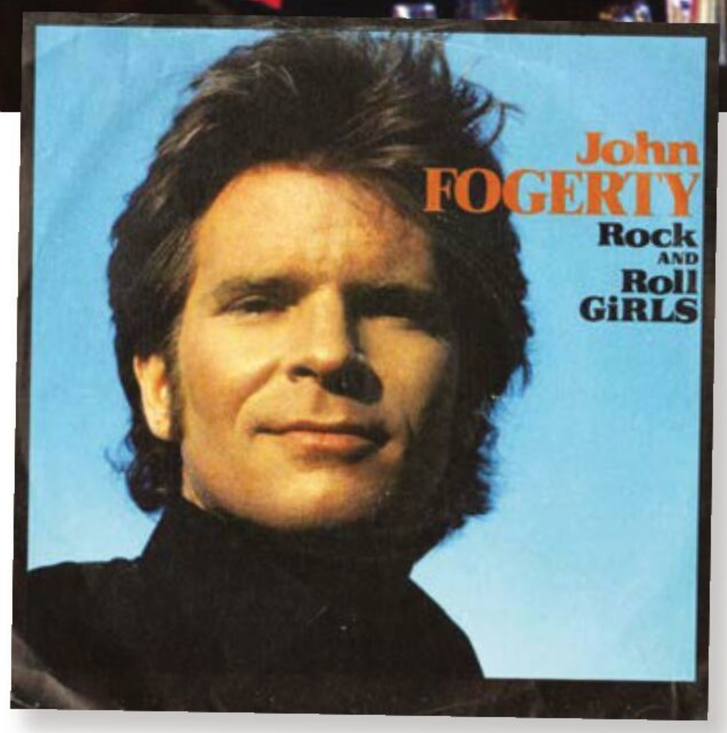
SINGLES
Have You Ever Seen The Rain?/Hey Tonight
JANUARY: US chart position 8

Sweet Hitch-Hiker/ Door To Door
JULY: US chart position 6

1972

ALBUM
Mardi Gras
APRIL: (US sales gold) US chart position 12

SINGLES
Someday Never Comes/ Tearin' Up The Country
MAY 1972: 25



'OK, I'll play with you.' Just a little bit late there, John." Admitting that he did not make his peace with Tom (who died in 1990), John reveals why he felt unable to grant him his wish. Some of the last words Tom ever uttered to John while he lay in an Arizona hospital were: "Saul Zaentz is my best friend." They were the six words that John Fogerty could never forgive.

Creedence were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 1993. For Jake Rohrer, it was "the saddest chapter of their career". It was Fogerty at his most ruthless: he'd learned Cook and Clifford had sold their Creedence veto rights to Zaentz for five-figure sums, and he was not happy about it. Cook and Clifford arrived at the Hollywood centre with their families, expecting to play Creedence hits with Fogerty that night. They were informed by the stage manager that Fogerty would be performing with an all-star band (including Bruce Springsteen and Robbie Robertson) instead. "It was humiliating," says Cook. "It was like John thought he was getting inducted, instead of Creedence. He thought he could exclude us." Booing was heard when Fogerty took the stage. "It was a terrible night," concludes Rohrer, "and all it did was pour kerosene on the flames."

In Hank Bordowitz's well-researched Creedence biography, *Bad Moon Rising* (1998), there are 31 index entries for 'Fogerty, John, bitterness and rage'. Fogerty claims to lack venom these days ("I'm no longer a prisoner of my own device, to quote a Don Henley line," he assures us), but it's noticeable that, during a follow-up interview, he repeatedly describes a former business associate as a cheat, a liar and the second worst man in history after Saddam Hussein.

Clifford, who regards Fogerty's career arc as "kind of Shakespearean", attempts to put a positive slant on Creedence's ongoing hostilities. "The good news is, the music is what's important," Clifford says. "Look, we all made mistakes. It's unfortunate, but the legacy of the music is still there, intact."

The bayou will surely freeze over, however, before Creedence Clearwater Revival share a stage again.

"JOHN WASTED TWO DECADES WAGING A WAR WITH SAUL ZAENTZ"

Jake Rohrer

KEEP ON CHOOGLIN'!

Here's a playlist of 10 of *Uncut*'s favourite Creedence tracks. Check out on Spotify

BORN ON THE BAYOU
FROM: **BAYOU COUNTRY**
The Creedence mission statement: a perfect meeting of swampy groove and Louisiana mythology.

KEEP ON CHOOGLIN'
FROM: **BAYOU COUNTRY**
A bouncy seven-minute boogie on one chord. To choogle: 1. To chug like a train. 2. To have sex.

LODI
FROM: **GREEN RIVER**
Lovely ballad about a failed musician touring a depressing circuit of small provincial clubs.

CROSS-TIE WALKER
FROM: **GREEN RIVER**
A quintessential Johnny Cash two-step with a nifty bassline and a tale about a hobo hopping a train and starting a new life.

IT CAME OUT OF THE SKY
FROM: **WILLY AND THE POOR BOYS**
A farmer finds a UFO in his field... and unwittingly becomes the most famous man in America.

EFFIGY
FROM: **WILLY AND THE POOR BOYS**
Epic album-closer warning of revolution and apocalypse, with savagely exciting guitar solo from Fogerty.

RAMBLE TAMBLE
FROM: **COSMO'S FACTORY**
Rockabilly tune that slows into a near-psychedelic middle section. A real Creedence wall of sound.

I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE
FROM: **COSMO'S FACTORY**
Marvin Gaye's hit is given the 11-minute CCR treatment. Soulful and satisfying.

PAGAN BABY
FROM: **PENDULUM**
A churning, crunching riff meets a blistering Fogerty vocal on this underrated rocker.

SOMEDAY NEVER COMES
FROM: **MARDI GRAS**
Tear-jerking song about Fogerty watching his parents' divorce – and how the son was fated to repeat the actions of the father.

Released: MAY 28, 2013

WROTE A SONG FOR EVERYONE

Two new songs and a dozen from the Creedence days, reworked with sundry collaborators. Mutual admiration and high spirits ensue.

By Jason Anderson

DAVE GROHL was not yet part of the future Nirvana fold when Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic formed a CCR cover act called the Sellouts, their first band together as teens in 1985. Instead, Grohl had to wait a few decades to properly demonstrate his own fealty to Fogerty by ripping through the Foo Fighters-assisted rendition of "Fortunate Son" that launches Fogerty's ninth solo album *Wrote A Song For Everyone*.

Fogerty credits his wife Julie for putting the scheme in motion. Thanks to her encouragement, Fogerty was closer than he'd ever been to making peace with his past, going so far as to take his gold records out of storage and put them up on the walls of his home studio. So he was open to the idea when she asked him, "Why don't you get a bunch of the people you love and sing your songs?" When he started reaching out to artists and asking them if they wanted to participate, he told them what he wanted were not studious renditions of beloved oldies, but fresh products of a collaboration, the kind that could only happen with fellow artists working in a room together rather than trading audio files.

In a series of sessions that began in 2011 in studios all over the US (plus a day at Abbey Road with his sons Shane and Tyler), Fogerty convened with old friends and new acquaintances. The fruit of their labours is an immensely appealing set of 12 new versions of CCR hits and deeper cuts, plus two originals that feel entirely of a piece with the endeavour.

CRITICS' VERDICT

"The nicest moments come when his simple structures are allowed to do their thing. 'Lodi', in which Fogerty chooglesin company no more famous than that of his own sons, is one of the best." JOHN ROBINSON, UNCUT, 7/2013

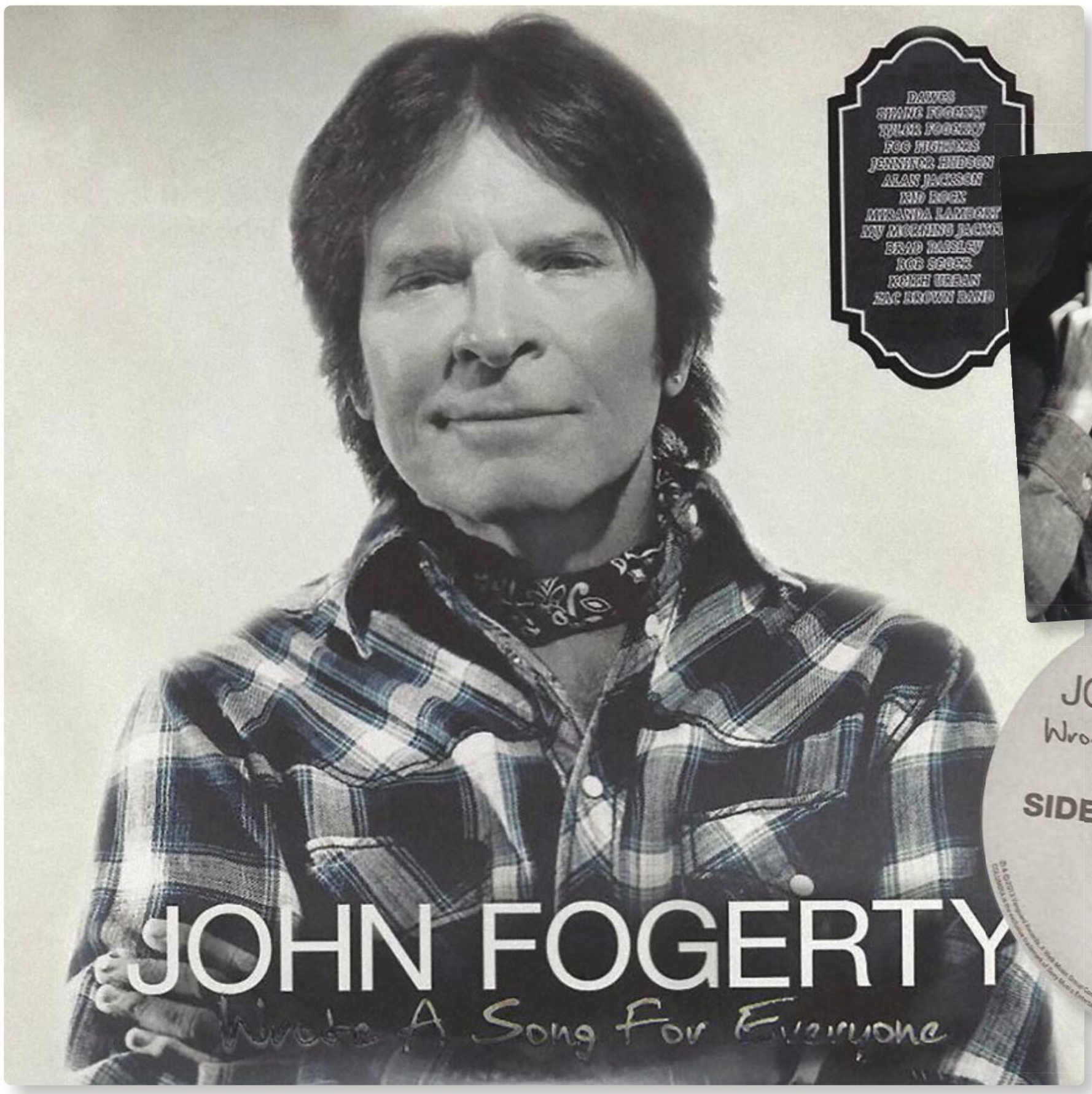
Trading lines and solos with a hero who seems just as stoked as he is, Grohl is not the only guest at this party who's clearly having a good time. An unmistakable quality of ebullience unites performances otherwise as different as Keith Urban's exuberant take on "Another Saturday Night", Kid Rock's lusty, raspy "Born On The Bayou" and a funked-up, New Orleans-style "Proud Mary" featuring Jennifer Hudson, Allen Toussaint and Rebirth Brass Band. Even Bob Seger's stately duet with Fogerty on "Who'll The Stop Rain" feels anything but heavy-hearted.

The high spirits that course through the record are a testament to the enduring vitality of the songs at hand and to the positive feedback loop that's created between the many famous fans and a host who's generous enough to let their energy and instincts shape the course of the performances. Given the air of timidity that so often make tribute albums feel superfluous, the music of *Wrote A Song For Everyone* boasts a remarkable degree of joy and spontaneity.

The extent to which Fogerty shifts his own approach across each song shows how willing he is to accommodate his collaborators. With Foo Fighters and "Fortunate Son", he's all fury and velocity, exuding a high-adrenaline intensity that would've impressed his 25-year-old self. For the amiable country-rock renditions of "Another Saturday Night" with Urban and "Hot Rod Heart" with Brad Paisley, he keeps his vocals clear and brisk and his guitar licks clean and crisp. He graciously lets Kid Rock be the showboat when it comes to hollering "Born On The Bayou", though the Southern rocker rewards Fogerty's kindness by showing some restraint (at least by his standards). And while Fogerty admits in his memoir *Fortunate Son* that the working methods of My Morning Jacket threw him for a loop, he sounds entirely committed to the journey they take through an initially cosmic and ultimately burly version of "Long As I Can See The Light".

The album's highs are high enough to make the otherwise fine achievements amongst the cover fare – like "Bad Moon Rising" with the Zac Brown Band and "Someday Never Comes" with Dawes – feel a little safe. Likewise, the powerhouse performances of Miranda Lambert on "Wrote A Song For Everyone" and Jennifer Hudson on "Proud Mary" make one wish he'd roped in more female guests since they may have felt less pressure than some do here to assume the Fogerty guises of ornery swamp rocker and sage elder statesman.

In any case, the performers on *Wrote A Song For Everyone* achieve the nigh-impossible again and again, which is to match the energy that CCR poured into the songs years before. On "Lodi" – recorded with his sons Shane and Tyler – Fogerty finds a new gear entirely, subverting the



laconic humour of the original's tale of thwarted ambition by demonstrating the pleasure even the most battle-hardened performer feels when the music flows freely and friends are close at hand.

FOGERTY is joined by his sons on the two new songs, too. A blues number that its author imagined as a kind of morality play, "Train Of Fools" is the more perfunctory of the pair but is still delivered with impressive gusto, Fogerty using his voice to convey the righteous anger of a Bible Belt preacher while his guitar-playing demonstrates a more playful swagger.

As for "Mystic Highway", the song feels like it could go on forever and not in a bad way. There's an effortless quality to the performance as Fogerty cycles through the song's various forms – heartland rocker, Texas two-step, gospel spiritual, a silvery burst of psych boogie. In the appropriately beatific video for "Mystic Highway", Fogerty's the epitome of contentment as he plays and sings alongside his sons on his porch before a gathering of beaming family and friends in a night-time scene lit by hanging lights and a fire made for roasting marshmallows. These images of the older Fogerty are juxtaposed against grainier ones of his younger selves; seen together, they not only suggest a continuity but the sense that for all that's happened out on those roads he travelled, the choice of direction was the right one because it led to this destination. CR

Again and again, performers match the energy that CCR poured into the songs years before

TRACKMARKS WROTE A SONG FOR EVERYONE

1. Fortunate Son (with Foo Fighters) ★★★★
2. Almost Saturday Night (with Keith Urban) ★★★★
3. Lodi (with Shane and Tyler Fogerty) ★★★
4. Mystic Highway ★★★★★
5. Wrote A Song For Everyone (with Miranda Lambert and Tom Morello) ★★★★
6. Bad Moon Rising (with Zac Brown Band) ★★★
7. Long As I Can See The Light (with My Morning Jacket) ★★★★
8. Born On The Bayou (with Kid Rock) ★★★
9. Train Of Fools ★★★
10. Someday Never Comes (with Dawes) ★★★
11. Who'll Stop The Rain (with Bob Seger) ★★★
12. Hot Rod Heart (with Brad Paisley) ★★★
13. Have You Ever Seen The Rain? (with Alan Jackson) ★★★
14. Proud Mary (with Jennifer Hudson and featuring Allen Toussaint and Rebirth Brass Band) ★★★★

Label: Vanguard
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Studio 606, Los Angeles; Ocean Way Recording, Hollywood; Abbey Road Studios, London; NRG Studios, North Hollywood; Southern Ground Studios, Nashville; Blackbird Studio, Nashville; The Allen Roadhouse, Clarkston, MS; Apogee Studio, Santa Monica, CA; Ocean Way Nashville, Nashville; The Wheelhouse, Nashville; Castle Recording Studios, Franklin, TN; Piety Street Recording, New Orleans; Studio SavoyFaire, Eunice, LA
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, banjo, acoustic, lap steel and electric guitars, handclaps, electric sitar, whistle), Tyler Fogerty (acoustic guitar, backing vocals), Shane Fogerty (acoustic and electric guitar, handclaps), David Santos (bass), Kenny Aronoff (drums, tambourine), Herb Petersen (guitar, backing vocals), Patrick Sauber (mandolin, backing vocals), Bob Malone (piano, B-3 organ), Randy Kohrs (lap steel guitar), Alethea Mills (backing vocals), Chavonne Stewart (backing vocals), David Morgan (backing vocals), other guests as credited above
Highest chart position: UK 75 ; US 3

Fortunate son: John Fogerty at home on his 22-acre estate in Thousand Oaks, California, bought for $9m in 2013

"THE POLICE SHOWED UP, SO WE MOVED..."

The *Creedence Clearwater Revival* man on Woodstock, Robert Johnson and Cosmo's Factory. "North Face started next door," he tells *Michael Bonner*. "Now they own the whole block."

MYRIAMSANT

UNCUT JULY 2013

"TOO much detail all the time," says John Fogerty towards the end of our interview. Indeed, Fogerty has spent the previous hour answering your questions in almost forensic detail, whether it's recalling the precise location of Creedence Clearwater Revival's fabled rehearsal studios, Cosmo's Factory, dispelling myths around their Woodstock performance or offering a view on the solo career of his late brother and onetime estranged bandmate, Tom.

This month, Fogerty has a new album out – *Wrote A Song For Everyone* – in which he's re-recorded many of his best-known songs as duets with artists including Dawes, MMJ, Allen Toussaint and the Foo Fighters. Its release affords us the chance to chat about that incredible run of hits he enjoyed as CCR's singer-songwriter, and even allows him to reveal his current feelings about his ex-bandmates: "If we were all around to do it today, it would be a different story. As you get older, you get a chance to cool off and things aren't so urgent. You become a grown-up about a lot of stuff."

Is it true that you are also a drummer, and that you were a huge John Bonham fan? *Dave Grohl*

It's true that I was a drummer and that I am a huge John Bonham fan. Dave's a really wonderful man. He's incredibly intense. [*Foo Fighters' version of "Fortune Son"*] caused me to push myself to higher levels. People say that Creedence was a roots rock'n'roll band. I don't know if that was really true, but 40 years later it seems like a good fit. That's kind of what we do. It was just a lot of fun. We follow the trail backwards.

I read that CCR's original Cosmo's Factory rehearsal studio was somewhere in Berkeley. What was it like? *Will Johnson, Long Beach, CA*

It was on 5th Street, just off Gillman. At one point, we'd rehearsed in Tom's garage in the afternoon in El Cerrito. The police showed up, so we moved to a little shack behind [*Creedence drummer*] Doug Clifford's house. Anyway, the police showed up at that place, too. So now we needed a place to rehearse where we wouldn't bother anybody, so we went to the warehouse area and found a big, empty space which we fixed up. The cover on the album *Cosmo's Factory* is a small portion that we hung drapes around and laid carpet on the floor so it wouldn't have that big, hollow warehouse sound. The people next door started a few months after us, The North Face, who make camping and outdoor equipment. There was a few guys working next door, sewing sleeping bags. They said, "Wow, we can hear you guys through the wall, it really is kind of cool." Now they own the whole block or something.

What are your memories of the time you spent in the army reserve unit in the late '60s? *Benjamin Steward, Weybridge, Surrey*

We were all young guys that were trying to start our life as adults. On my active duty, I was in Fort Bragg, Fort Knox, where they have the gold vault. It's also the Armour Center, so I remember a lot of jeeps. As a matter of fact, at Fort Knox I believe I saw Elvis's signature on a wall. It said, 'Elvis Presley '58'. Now everyone would have a cell phone and take pictures, but back then nobody had a camera, so I just had to remember it. I was also at a place called Fort Lee, Virginia, that was my active duty. I remember that time as being when the army conflicted with what I was trying to do as a musician, and of course you had to shave your head and go to meetings. It interfered with the musical career, but I look at my friendships from then very fondly.

"THE IKE & TINA VERSION OF 'PROUD MARY' WAS JUST SO FULL OF WONDERFUL THINGS"

John Fogerty

What do you remember about playing Woodstock? *Marie Carlin, Perth, Australia*

It was very exciting. We had to go by helicopter from a Holiday Inn where the artists were staying. As we got closer to the site, you could see people had abandoned their cars. It was like a sci-fi movie. I have no idea how those people – the morning that Woodstock was finally over and Jimi played his last note – got out of there. When we got on site, we saw maybe half a million people, and because I seem to have this old soul inside me, I was worried it would be like a nightclub and somebody yelling "Fire!": if some sort of panic set in, all those people would move and there'd be a lot of danger. Playing the show itself was interesting. By the time I got on stage, the Dead had been on stage nearly two hours and their equipment had broken. I could only imagine they were in their usual state of mind – stoned, trying to find a power outlet. So by the time we got on stage, it was after midnight. The Dead had put half a million people to sleep and so we tried very hard to wake them up.

Who were The Shit Kicker 3? *Harper McLean, Butte, Montana*

Back in the day when Tom had left Creedence, I had bought myself a pedal-steel guitar, a Sho Bud Maverick. Anyway, it only had three pedals, so I figured I could manage that. I never got really, really good – I just got to where I could kind of make noise on it. But after the concerts, when the trio of Creedence was out on tour, we'd go back to a designated party room in the hotel we were staying in and we would play other songs, not just our own hits. Because I was sitting at a steel guitar, I tended to pick songs that would lend themselves to that style. We didn't pretend we were good at this. It was just a lot of fun.

There have been many cover versions of Creedence songs; do you have a favourite, and why? *Garry Thomas, Christchurch, New Zealand*

I'd have to start off by mentioning the Ike & Tina Turner version of "Proud Mary". It was just so full of new and wonderful things. The idea that she had a slow intro to it, then suddenly all hell breaks lose. That was an amazing record. There was a fella called Al Wilson, and he did

Going mobile: Creedence circa 1970

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; RICK DIAMOND/WIREIMAGE

Dave Grohl and John Fogerty at the Hollywood Palladium, January 31, 2013

a version of "Lodi" and that was on the radio here at the time, back in 1969 or so. Solomon Burke's "Proud Mary" was very nice at the time. Stylistically, at least, to have somebody like that cover your song – I was still 23 years old – that was such an honour. Have I ever heard Pavement's version of "Sinister Purpose"? No, but I'll check it out.

After so many great recordings and covers of your songs over the years, what was your vision going into this latest project [*Wrote A Song For Everyone*]? *Allen Toussaint*

Allen and I worked together on this album on a track called "Proud Mary". We were both very busy, but I could have spent several days asking him about the wonderful recording and musical career he's had. I encouraged all the artists to have a new look, their own vision of the song. I have an almost automatic reference for the songs, as I know them so well. But each artist, I wanted them to approach it like it was something new. I discovered great new artists working on that.

What bands did you see while growing up in El Cerrito? *Nina Harding, Stockport*

We had a wonderful venue called the Oakland Auditorium. I remember one show: Jackie Wilson, Hank Ballard & The Midnighters, BB King. It was always first come, first served, and these shows were usually on a Saturday or Sunday evening, so you'd get there at maybe 2 or 3pm and when they opened the door at 7, you ran like a son-of-a-gun to try to get to the front row. I usually went with my brother, Tom. I saw Jackie Wilson, Larry Williams... He was quite a character, doing all these hits, then he'd jump to the floor right in front of us and all these girls – BOOM! They ran up to him. He had on what we'd now call a tearaway shirt, because when they backed away he was naked from the waist up and his pants were in tatters.

Can you attempt to quantify to me how excellent the riff is for "Fortune Son"? *Rick Steers, Edinburgh*

It was a piano riff. In those days, I could play some boogie-woogie piano. I really loved when you got the boogie-woogie bass thing going, then you'd riff over the top. I was never anywhere like Meade Lux Lewis, but of course we had Jerry Lee Lewis, who was basically playing boogie-woogie with a drumbeat. It was a really cool rock'n'roll style, but it was very much like boogie-woogie of the late '30s and '40s, in the style of all those great piano players. So I could do that. It was a standardised riff, you could say. Steve Cropper did something like it in "Behave Yourself", and of course Steve was a huge influence on me. It was not so much invention, then, as it is a clever use of something that came before.

Why did CCR stop doing encores? *Chris Evans, Raleigh, North Carolina*

I began to notice that the biggest acts – I mean The Beatles and the Stones – were not doing encores because of safety. They would run off and then be done. They would try an "Elvis has left the building" kind of thing, as they wanted to get out of there before the audience rushed the stage. So that was a thing I realised was happening. Now we had refrained from doing encores at a few shows in the States, but looking back it would have been a good idea to have some security come on stage, turn on the lights and start taking the equipment apart. Anyway, it was just the speed that things had gotten to with the very, very large bands – I'm sure Zeppelin were in the same boat – because of safety.

Last year, you joined The Black Keys on stage at Coachella to pay tribute to Levon Helm. How did that come about? *John Edmunds, Shreveport, Louisiana*

That's right, we played "The Weight". They called me. It was like the day before. My kids were all at Coachella, as it's relatively near to where we live. When you're grown up, the idea of standing in 115-degree heat with no change of clothes and no place to sleep, you've got to really love it! You know, I turned my kids onto The Black Keys. I'd heard them way back in 2002, in one of those gadget stores, and I assumed it was an old Chess recording. I went up to the front desk and asked the kid who was working there – the idea was that they're supposed to show off the store's various stereo systems, and he was playing The Black Keys' first album. So I was pleased to be able to go home and for once tell my kids about a new band I'd heard first!

What happened when you went to Robert Johnson's grave in 1990, and how did that affect your decision to play Creedence songs again after 25 years? *Helen Rodgers, Streatham, south London*

I thought it was to refresh my memory and fill in the blues family tree, if you will, look up where people like John Lee Hooker had lived. Part of the lure was hearing that there are several reported grave sites for Robert Johnson, so I tried diligently to find the best one. I got there on a hot and humid day, and I basically had an epiphany. Robert Johnson was right there, a rock star – the boxset of his recordings had been released in 1989 and it was on the Billboard charts. I was standing at the place where he was probably buried and I began to ponder who owned the songs. I thought it was some lawyer up in New York City, a shyster who somehow finagled his way into owning the master tapes. I thought, 'It doesn't matter, Robert. They're your songs.' Then a light went on in my head – it was almost as if I was talking about myself, because my songs are my songs. It doesn't matter who owns the records, they're my songs. So I could play those songs again in public. I realised that was what the trip was for. That blew my consciousness.

Did you listen to the solo albums of your brother, Tom? If yes, did you like them (then or now)? *Fred van Ginneken, via email*

Oh, yeah. How do I say this... I felt that Tom's own songwriting had not really developed yet. There was an album he made with a band called Ruby [*Ruby, 1976*], and my brother Bob and I were listening to it and after about three songs, I said, "Tom's writing has got a whole lot better." Then it turned out the songs were collaborations or written by someone else in that band. To me, that was one of the less polished parts of Tom's musical makeup. But his singing was great. Tom had this sweet, high voice, like Bobby Freeman – or Ritchie Valens. There was certainly a place for Tom in the musical world; I just always felt that in Creedence, with our roadhouse persona, it didn't fit what we were doing. By the way, there's a rumour about one of his albums that I'm on it, but I'm not. I'm not on any of Tom's recordings. GR

KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES, EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

Released: NOVEMBER 20, 2020

FOGERTY'S FACTORY

Keeping it in the family, Fogerty's lockdown produces an illuminating set of self-covers. Also pictured: the fruits of his labours.

By Tom Pinnock

JUST over a week after the World Health Organisation declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic, *Rolling Stone* published a video of John Fogerty performing solo from his California home. The tone was reassuringly avuncular: here was Fogerty playing three CCR songs, "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?" by a white ranch fence, "Bad Moon Rising" in his home studio, and the soulful "Long As I Can See The Light" on a grand piano decked out with candles, a roaring fire behind him. "I'm sure we're all going stir crazy after 10 days or so of doing this," he told viewers.

Fast forward to over a year of "doing this", and the 18 home videos that John Fogerty put out in 2020 remain a highlight, for his fans at least, of that difficult period. Like many a good idea, it started out small and grew organically. Four days after that first video appeared in late March, Fogerty uploaded a YouTube clip of himself playing the psychedelic country rag "Lookin' Out My Back Door", over by that white fence; two days later came an acoustic "Proud Mary" in his studio.

When Fogerty returned to YouTube seven days later, to begin a series of weekly performances, he wasn't alone. At the suggestion of his wife Julie, he'd roped in his three youngest kids, Tyler, Shane and Kelsy, on guitars and bass. An unpromising idea on paper, in practice it was one of the keys to the success of what was now being called *Fogerty's Factory*.

"Here it was, a family band right under my nose and I didn't even know it!" Fogerty told *Uncut* last year. "It's been hard to get everyone all together over the last few years, so I'm selfishly enjoying [*lockdown*]. Being able to make music with my family is just the most amazing feeling."

The presence of his children certainly enhanced the performances, bringing a ragged warmth to proceedings as family members smiled or laughed at each other during takes, clearly having a great time. Their retrievers (one named Creedence) wandered into shot too, or sat adoringly by their master. The Fogertys had welcomed us into their world, and it was hard for a viewer not to be sucked into that mood of conviviality and communality. Enjoy yourselves, they seemed to be saying, put your feet up – just watch your drink on the mixing desk.

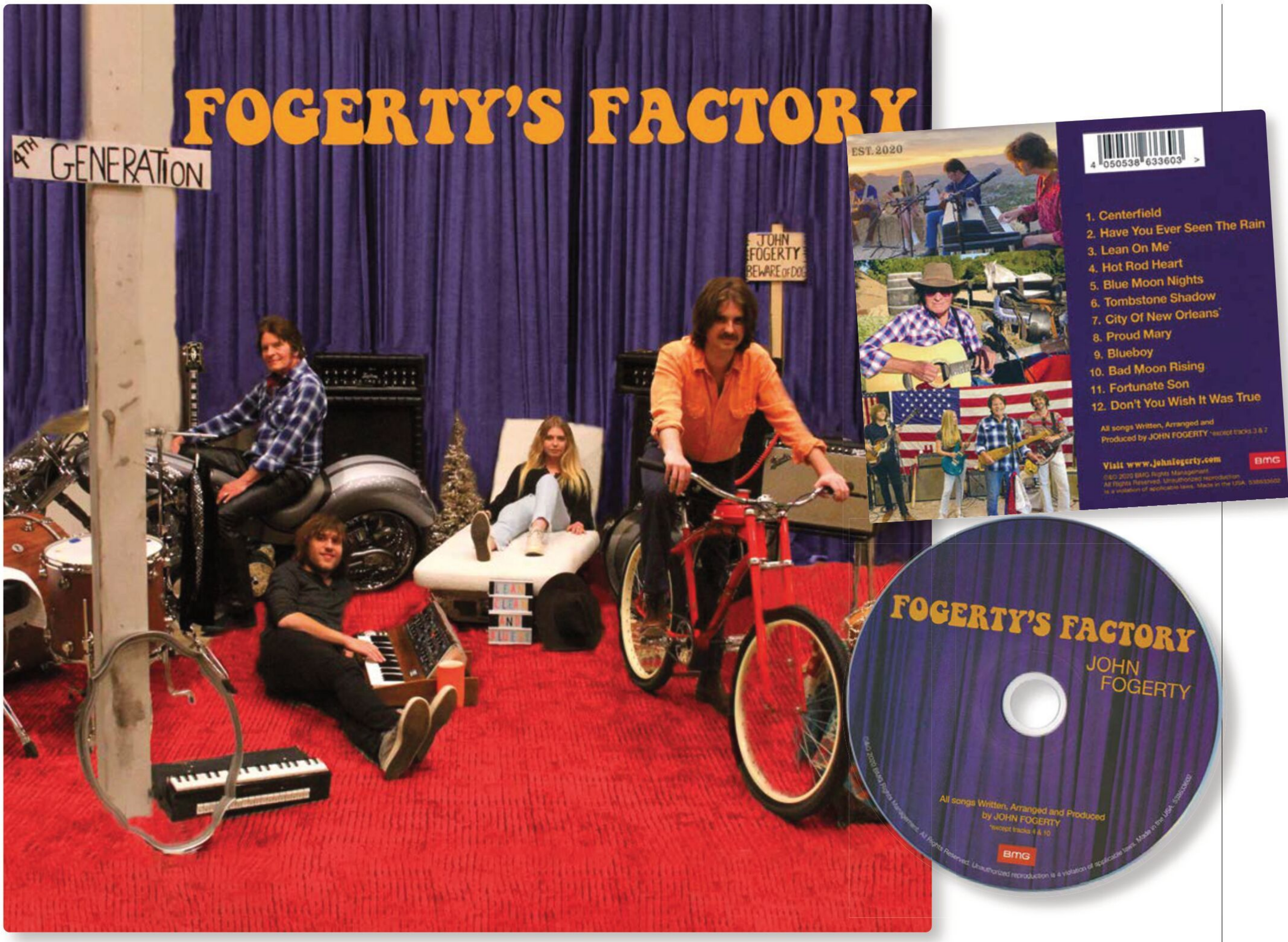
Those who tuned in also got to experience a snoop around the estate, which didn't seem too shabby a place to spend lockdown: there were incredible views across valleys and mountains, Fogerty's Lost Canyon studio, "the boys"' home studio Radio Astro, complete with a huge blinking synthesiser, a fleet of sports cars and a VW camper with a flower-power paintjob.

Recording was at first handled with a single iPhone wielded by Fogerty's wife. It's hard to imagine many of his contemporaries, bar perhaps Neil Young, having the guts and sheer performing power to try out such a bravely unvarnished style, but it was a method that allowed Fogerty to show off his still-impressive voice. About halfway through the series, they switched to a more professional recording setup, but the "that'll-do" magic remained. A "Fogerty's Factory" digital EP appeared in May, followed by a physical expanded edition in November, which featured 12 tracks from the live sessions.

The Fogertys ventured out of the house for the album's opening track, "Centerfield", recorded live on the pitch at LA's Dodgers Stadium on JF's 75th birthday. Featuring Fogerty with a guitar shaped like a baseball bat, and some of the feel of the giant space channelled into the wide-open sound, it's a spirited

CRITICS' VERDICT

"These humble back-porch jams have already garnered *eight million* hits on social media. "Hot Rod Heart" and "Tombstone Shadow", especially, radiate with good-time vibes, bettered only by the fearsome charge through 'Fortunate Son'." TERRY STAUNTON, UNCUT, 1/2021



expression of hope that seems painfully apt in the era of Covid: "*We're born again, there's new grass on the field...*"

OF the other fine louder moments, 1997's "Hot Rod Heart" is swampy rock'n'roll, passionately performed in front of some of Fogerty's cars, while "Proud Mary" is distinguished by Tyler and Shane Fogerty's sensitive harmonies. "Tombstone Shadow", meanwhile, finds Kelsy Fogerty swapping guitar for drums, providing the crucial pulse, Fogerty senior chipping in over the kids' groove with his vocals, harmonica and lead guitar flourishes. His voice is so crisp on "Tombstone...", one suspects Auto-Tune may have been involved, which would be a shame, but the rest of the tracks appear to have escaped that, from the grimy R&B of *Blue Moon Swamp*'s "Blueboy" to a raucous "Fortunate Son".

Even more powerful are the quieter tracks, such as the acoustic campfire rambles of "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?" and "Blue Moon Nights", or the swinging country of "Don't You Wish It Was True", grounded by Tyler Fogerty's bass. We also get covers of Steve Goodman's "City Of New Orleans" and Bill Withers' "Lean On Me", the latter a tribute to the late songwriter as well as a message of support from Fogerty to the Black Lives Matter movement. Throughout, his children are a most sympathetic backing band – never too slick, always energised and forever resisting the urge to overshadow dad's considerable talents. Of course, Creedence kept it simple too, and it's in part that steady, tight pulse that has kept their music sounding so fresh over 50 years on.

The success of *Fogerty's Factory*, as an album, as a series of videos and as a concept, also underlines what a modern American folk hero the songwriter has become. Here's a patriot comfortable with tradition but also standing strong for equality, tolerance and justice, shining light when the times are dark. His work might have begun as almost a parody of America – a suburban Californian's tales of bayous, bad moons and riverboat queens – but in time it's become a legitimate, deeply meaningful part of the country's musical identity.

This might not be his finest record, but it's perhaps the one that tells us the most about who John Fogerty is as a man and a musician. GR

He's a patriot standing strong – shining a light when times are dark

TRACKMARKS FOGERTY'S FACTORY

1. Centerfield ★★★★
2. Have You Ever Seen The Rain? ★★★
3. Lean On Me ★★★★
4. Hot Rod Heart ★★★
5. Blue Moon Nights ★★★
6. Tombstone Shadow ★★★
7. City Of New Orleans ★★★
8. Proud Mary ★★★
9. Blueboy ★★★
10. Bad Moon Rising ★★★
11. Fortunate Son ★★★
12. Don't You Wish It Was True ★★★

Label: BMG Rights Management
Produced by: John Fogerty
Recorded at: Home, California
Personnel: John Fogerty (vocals, guitar), Shane Fogerty (bass, vocals), Tyler Fogerty (guitar, keyboard, vocals), Kelsy Fogerty (guitar, drums)
Highest chart position: UK –; US 63

Released: 1972 – 2019

LIVE & COMPILATIONS

A catalogue ready-made for compiling, a band that could own Woodstock live. Still, archiving Creedence took decades to achieve perfection.

By Peter Watts

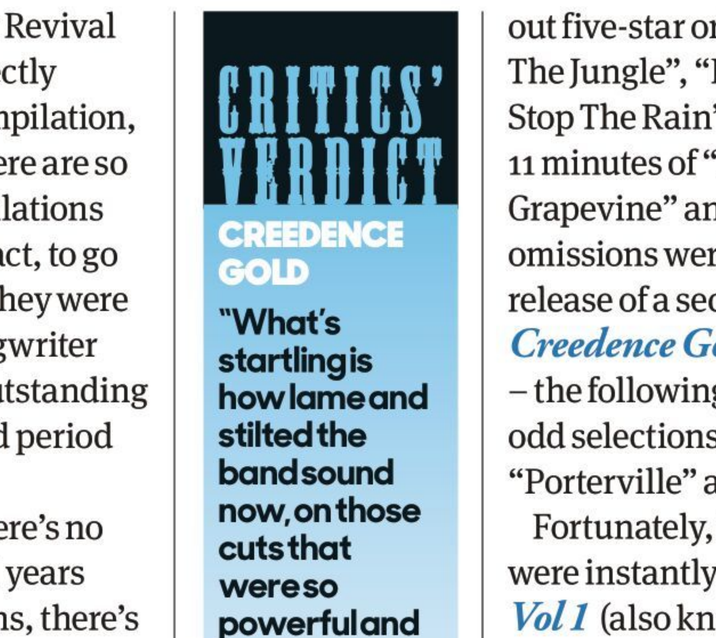
CREEDENCE Clearwater Revival are a band almost perfectly designed to suit the compilation, which might be why there are so many Creedence compilations – several hundred, in fact, to go by what's on Discogs. They were a group with a sole songwriter who wrote a string of outstanding singles in a ludicrously condensed period of time, meaning there is natural consistency of sound and feel. There's no need to factor in the experimental years or a long tail of diminishing returns, there's no second or third-string songwriter asking for their share of the pie. And everything is on the same label. In compilation terms, it's a slam dunk.

Or at least it should be. Fantasy clocked the potential before the band's corpse was cold, but it took them a couple of efforts to get it right. Their first attempt was *Creedence Gold* **FANTASY, 1972** ★★★★ which in the US boasted a striking contemporary cover. This picked out eight tracks from the vaults and stuck them in non-chronological order but ultimately fell flat. The material is obviously very good but it left out five-star originals like "Run Through The Jungle", "Fortunate Son" and "Who'll Stop The Rain", while finding space for all 11 minutes of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" and eight of "Suzie Q". These omissions were partly rectified by the release of a second instalment – *More Creedence Gold* **FANTASY, 1973** ★★★★ – the following year, but there still some odd selections such as "Bootleg", "Porterville" and "Molina".

CRITICS' VERDICT

CREEDENCE GOLD

"What's startling is how lame and stilted the band sound now, on those cuts that were so powerful and vital two or three years back." CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY, NME, 10/2/1973



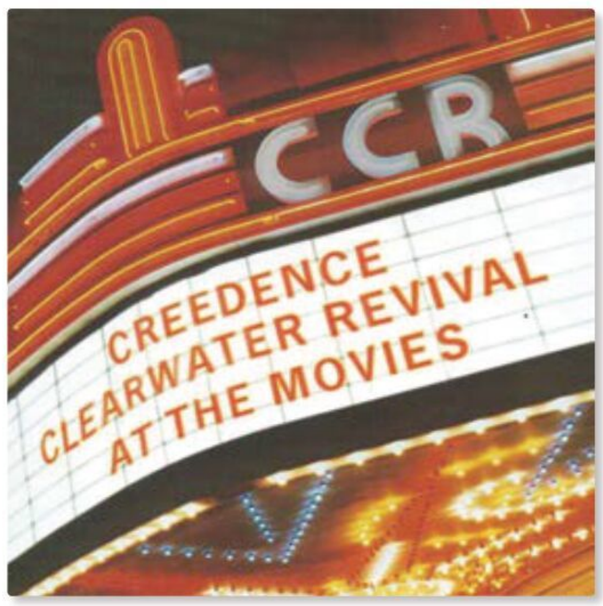
Fortunately, these errors of judgment were instantly surpassed by *Chronicle, Vol 1* (also known as *Chronicle: The 20 Greatest Hits*) **FANTASY, 1976** ★★★★★. This was the singles collection that CCR clearly warranted from the outset, featuring 13 A-sides and seven B-sides, and it swiftly became the band's best-selling album – indeed it has spent at least 500 accumulative weeks in the US charts over the years. It's been an entry point for millions over several generations, including many who would have been so satisfied with this selection that they never felt the need to dig any deeper.

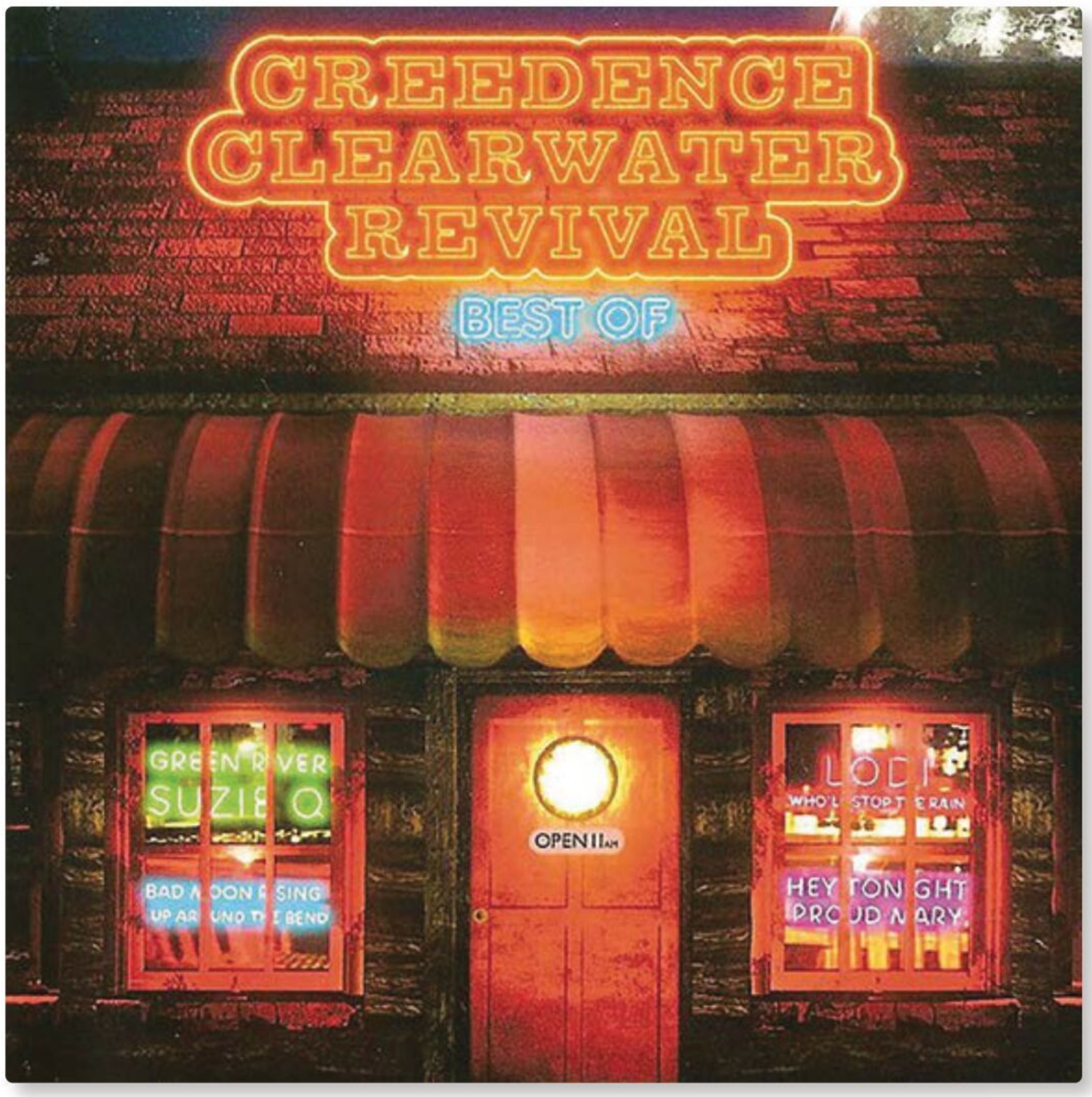
Here all the hits are included in chronological order, from "Suzie Q" to "Someday Never Comes", and every song justifies inclusion, even the pair off *Mardi Gras*. You can quibble at the slightly uneven nature of things – seven tracks from *Cosmo's Factory* and only one from *Bayou Country*? – but the beauty of a singles collections is that these are the facts, ma'am. Well, to a point. A handful of B-sides are missing – the most egregious being "Born On The Bayou" – and the original release added an edited version of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine", which was released as a low-charting single to promote the compilation. CD versions restored all original 11-minutes, which some felt interrupted the pace of one of the record industry's finest compilations.

A decade later it was joined by *Chronicle, Vol 2* **FANTASY, 1986** ★★★★, which included the best non-single moments from every studio album. It's a deep cutter's dream, and the 40 combined tracks are pretty much everything you need to hear. Both made swift transfer to CD – try to avoid some of the earlier CD versions as they don't have the best sound quality, and it's also back on vinyl for retro-purists. ➤

CREEDENCE GOLD

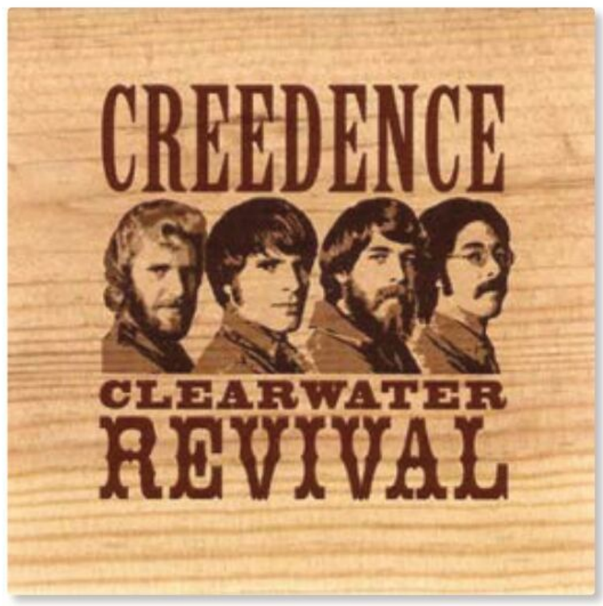
CREEDENCE COUNTRY
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL


CCR
CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER REVIVAL
AT THE MOVIES


CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL
BEST OF
GREEN RIVER
SUZIE Q
OPEN 11AM
LODI
HEY TONIGHT
PROUD MARY

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
CHRONICLE
VOLUME TWO
TWENTY GREAT CCR CLASSICS

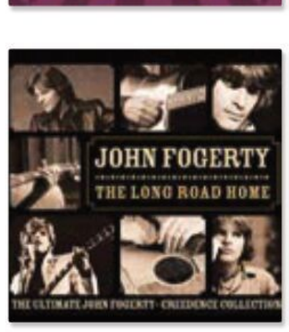
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
20 GOLDEN GREATS


CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL

BAD MOON RISING
THE BEST OF
CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
THE SINGLES COLLECTION

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL


JOHN FOGERTY
THE LONG ROAD HOME

LIVE
CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL
EUROPE

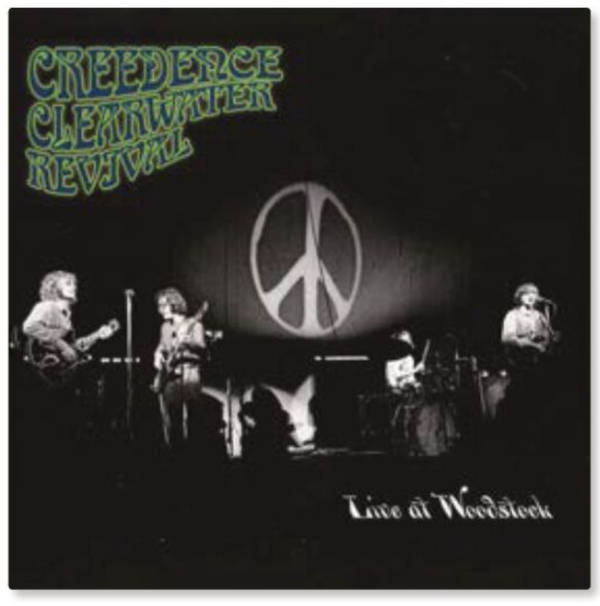
Creedence Clearwater Revival
The Album

THE BEST OF
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
20
SUPER HITS
AS ADVERTISED ON T.V.

CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER REVIVAL
COVERS THE CLASSICS

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
FEATURING JOHN FOGERTY
CHRONICLE
THE 20 GREATEST HITS
Fantasy

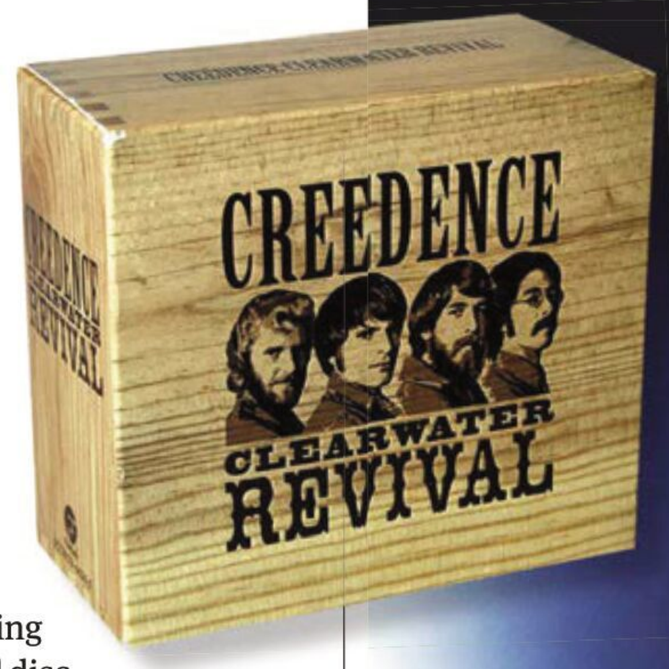
CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL
·THE CONCERT·


CREEDENCE
CLEARWATER
REVIVAL
Live at Woodstock

Between the two editions of *Chronicle* came several other diversions on the same theme. There was the non-chronological but acceptable ***20 Golden Greats*** **FANTASY,** 1979 ★★★★, which came out in Australia, and 1981's ***Hits Album*** **FANTASY, 1981** ★★★★, which came out in the UK, Germany and Ireland. There was also a good budget set on K-Tel – ***The Best of Creedence Clearwater Revival*** **K-TEL, 1977** ★★★★ with decent track selection, a good cover and easily located in charity shops. All are reasonable acquisitions if you can't find *Chronicle*.

Keen to find even more ways to exploit their finest asset, Fantasy's next trick was themed compilations. ***Creedence Country*** **FANTASY, 1981** ★★★ tried to push CCR into the country music bracket with 12 tracks that have a country flavour – "Lodi", "Cotton Fields", "Ramble Tamble", "Ooby Dooby", etc. The 2004 CD added three more, including one each by Cook and Clifford from *Mardi Gras*. That was followed by ***The Movie Album*** **FANTASY, 1985** ★★★, which had eight CCR songs that had featured on various film soundtracks – the 2000 CD version bumped that up to 13. A few decades later this oddball trinity was completed by ***Creedence Clearwater Revival Cover The Classics*** **FANTASY, 2009** ★★★, which rounded up cover versions. As with its predecessors, it's an interesting intellectual exercise but one almost completely without a point.

A raft of all-new same-old compilations followed the switch to CD, with nothing of real interest arriving until the ***Creedence Clearwater Revival: Box Set*** **FANTASY, 2001** ★★★★. This was close to definitive, featuring a CD of pre-CCR material – previously only covered by Fantasy's 1975 ***Pre-Creedence*** ★★★ – every studio album, a handful of obscurities like the 1970 novelty promo "45 Revolutions Per Minute", four tracks from *The Concert* and, oddly, all of *Live In Europe*. It's almost all there – the only complaint is that the studio albums run chronologically across four separate CDs rather than getting their own individual disc, but the lack of any unheard material is odd given the decent outtakes that would soon be added to the remastered reissues of the studio albums.



Very soon after this came the very good, nice-sounding single disc-set ***Bad Moon Rising: The Best Of Creedence Clearwater Revival*** **FANTASY, 2003** ★★★★★ – the 2008 version has a slightly altered track list. This amounted to a companion disc and easy one-stop shop for those intrigued by the boxset but wanting something a little less unwieldy. It's perhaps the best compilation if you need an alternative to *Chronicle*. 2009's ***The Singles Collection*** **FANTASY, 2009** ★★★★ provided a complete overview of the band's singles including "Porterville"/"Call It Pretending", all the B-sides and the posthumous edit of "...Grapevine". It came in a neat reproduction edition of 15 7"s with book and memorabilia and even added "45 Revolutions Per Minute", which would surely be one of the least played 45s of all time. They still weren't done. 2008's ***Best Of...*** **FANTASY 2008** ★★★★ has a decent cover and seems to be the most widely available comp outside of *Chronicle*, while there's also the 3CD ***Ultimate*** **UMC/CONCORD** ★★★★, which has 40 studio hits – all strong selections – and a dozen live tracks, with four taken from *The Concert* and the rest pulled from the 40th-anniversary album reissues.

FINALLY, ***The Long Road Home*** **FANTASY, 2005** ★★★ heralded John Fogerty's return to Fantasy after decades of dispute. The 25 songs are drawn from the Creedence years, Fogerty's solo career – "Centerfield", "Rambunctious Boy", a live version of "Almost Saturday Night" – plus a handful of live versions of Creedence classics like "Hey Tonight", "Keep On Chooglin'" and "Fortunate Son" that he had recently started performing again. There's also a spirited live take of "Rockin' All Over The World". It's not quite seamless, but it's a decent selection, a good opportunity for fans to get some of Fogerty's best solo tracks in one place and a bit of a heartwarmer.

In a similar manner to the misstep that started the compilation campaign, Creedence first dipped their toe into the live market with ***Live In Europe*** **FANTASY, 1973** ★★, but this time they took another 50 years to put it right. *Live In Europe* was recorded on the *Mardi Gras* tour when the group was reduced to a disgruntled trio. It's essentially a greatest-hits set without overemphasising cuts from *Mardi Gras*, including the likes of "Suzie Q", "Travelin' Band", "Bad Moon Rising" and "Born On The Bayou". The double record ends with a near 13-minute ramble through "Keep On Chooglin'" that takes up all of side four and includes some great Fogerty improv and an unexpected foray into *Pendulum*'s "Pagan Baby". Given the condition the band were in at the time, the overall performance isn't bad but the poor sound quality is more of a problem, giving the whole thing a colourless feel that's entirely in keeping with its limp-footnote-to-a-great-career role.

This was partly rectified in 1980 by ***The Concert*** **FANTASY, 1980** ★★★. This show was originally released as 'The Royal Albert Hall Concert' until it was pointed out the original tapes had been mislabelled and it was recorded at Oakland Coliseum on January 31, 1970. This was an essential year for CCR, who would record their finest album – *Cosmo's*

CRITICS' VERDICT

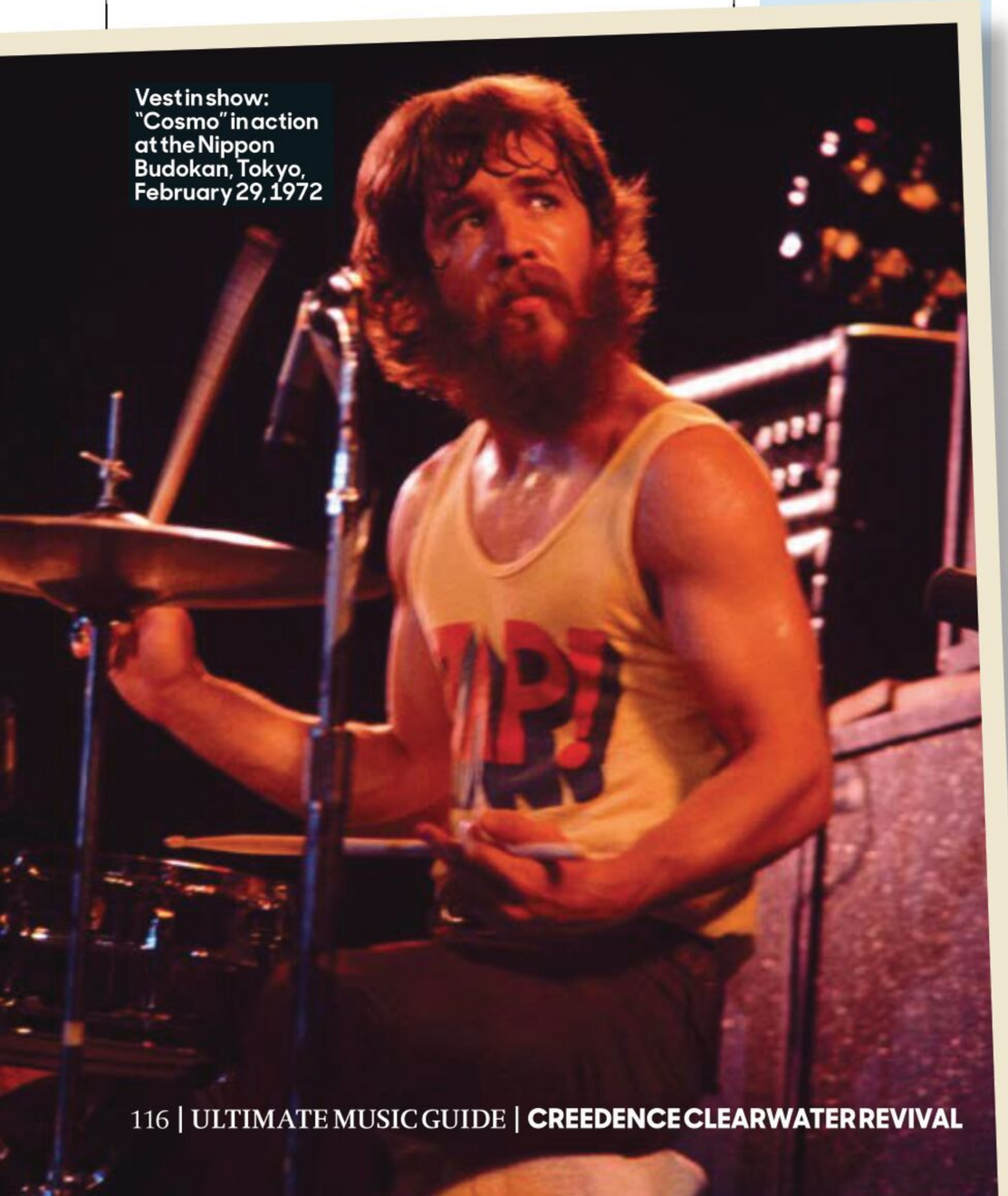
MORE CREEDENCE GOLD

"A pinch of hit single, a fistful of album tracks like 'Fortunate Son', 'Bootleg', 'Sweet Hitch-Hiker' et al. So where's 'Travelin' Band and 'Green River'? [...] They're probably making up the test pressings of 'Still More Creedence Gold' right now." CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY, NME, 22/9/1973

LIVE AT WOODSTOCK

"Given Fogerty's claim that 'there were half a million people asleep' at the time, it's no surprise the band aren't quite on barn-burning form. But while it lacks flashiness, the 11-song performance is both raw and cooking..." SHARON O'CONNELL, UNCUT, 10/2019

Tom Fogerty (left) and Stu Cook soundcheck ahead of their concert at the Royal Albert Hall, April 15, 1970


Vest in show: "Cosmo" in action at the Nippon Budokan, Tokyo, February 29, 1972

KOHHASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

Factory – but also start their decay. The set features 14 songs, each one a classic, including then current single "Who'll Stop The Rain"/"Travelin' Band", which would soon feature on *Cosmo's Factory*. It otherwise largely draws on material from their three 1969 releases. The band are tight and powerful but only really stretch out on the nine-minute "Keep On Chooglin'". Despite that, it's a good set and remained the pre-eminent Creedence live artefact for several decades.

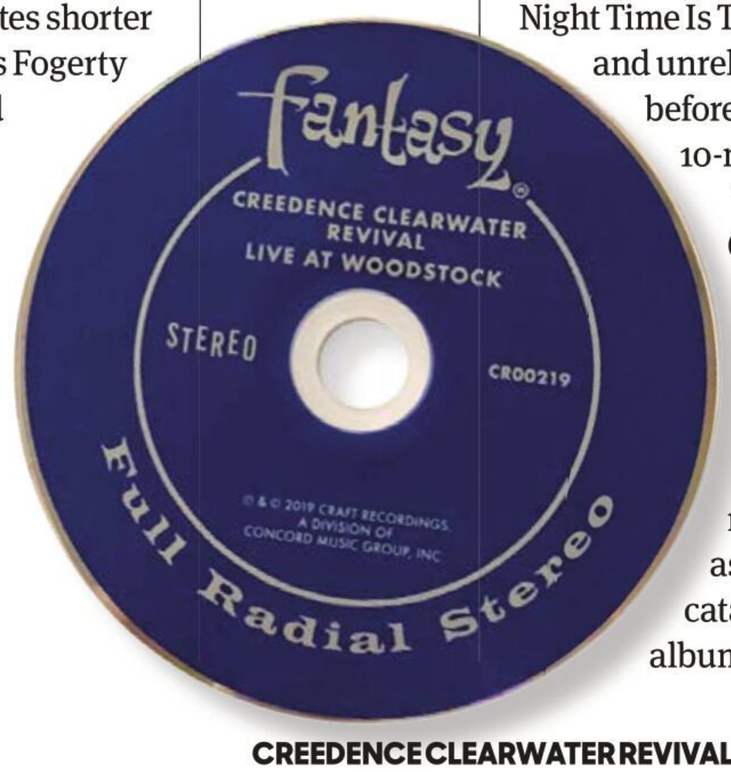
It was eventually surpassed by ***Live At Woodstock*** **FANTASY/CRAFT, 2019** ★★★★★. Creedence were the hottest band in the world when they played Woodstock in the middle of their still staggering three-albums-in-ten-months run of 1969. When not writing, rehearsing and recording, they found time to play a bunch of festivals and were one of the first major bands to agree to play Woodstock. They were handed a plum slot on the Saturday evening, helping persuade other bands to sign on. But Creedence were following Grateful Dead, who predictably overran and Creedence hit the stage after midnight. According to Fogerty, they had to play in front of a lacklustre audience that was tired, stoned or soporific following the Dead's 50-minute encore of "Turn On Your Love Light" (this was just five minutes shorter than CCR's entire set). Perhaps Fogerty was annoyed at this perceived lack of respect from the SF underground, a familiar bugbear, but he claimed that Creedence performed badly as a result and, seemingly at his insistence, Creedence's appearance was entirely cut from both the film and accompanying soundtrack. As this formed the definitive folk memory of the festival, Creedence were pretty much forgotten. Ironically, if the band had been included from the start, it might have given Creedence some of that critical respect Fogerty felt was lacking. Fogerty was a masterful songwriter and performer, but some of his strategic decisions sucked.

IN 1994, four Creedence tracks appeared on a 25th anniversary boxset – *Wooodstock: Three Days Of Peace And Music* – and then footage of three more tracks featured on the 40th-anniversary reissue of the film. But these nuggets didn't capture the fact that Creedence's performance was maybe the standout show from any band that weekend, a statement that surpassed even Hendrix for sustained groove and menace. The entire set appeared on Rhino's definitive 50th-anniversary 38-box set of the festival, but if you want to listen to it without exposure to the entrée of Dead's elongated drone, there was also this standalone release.

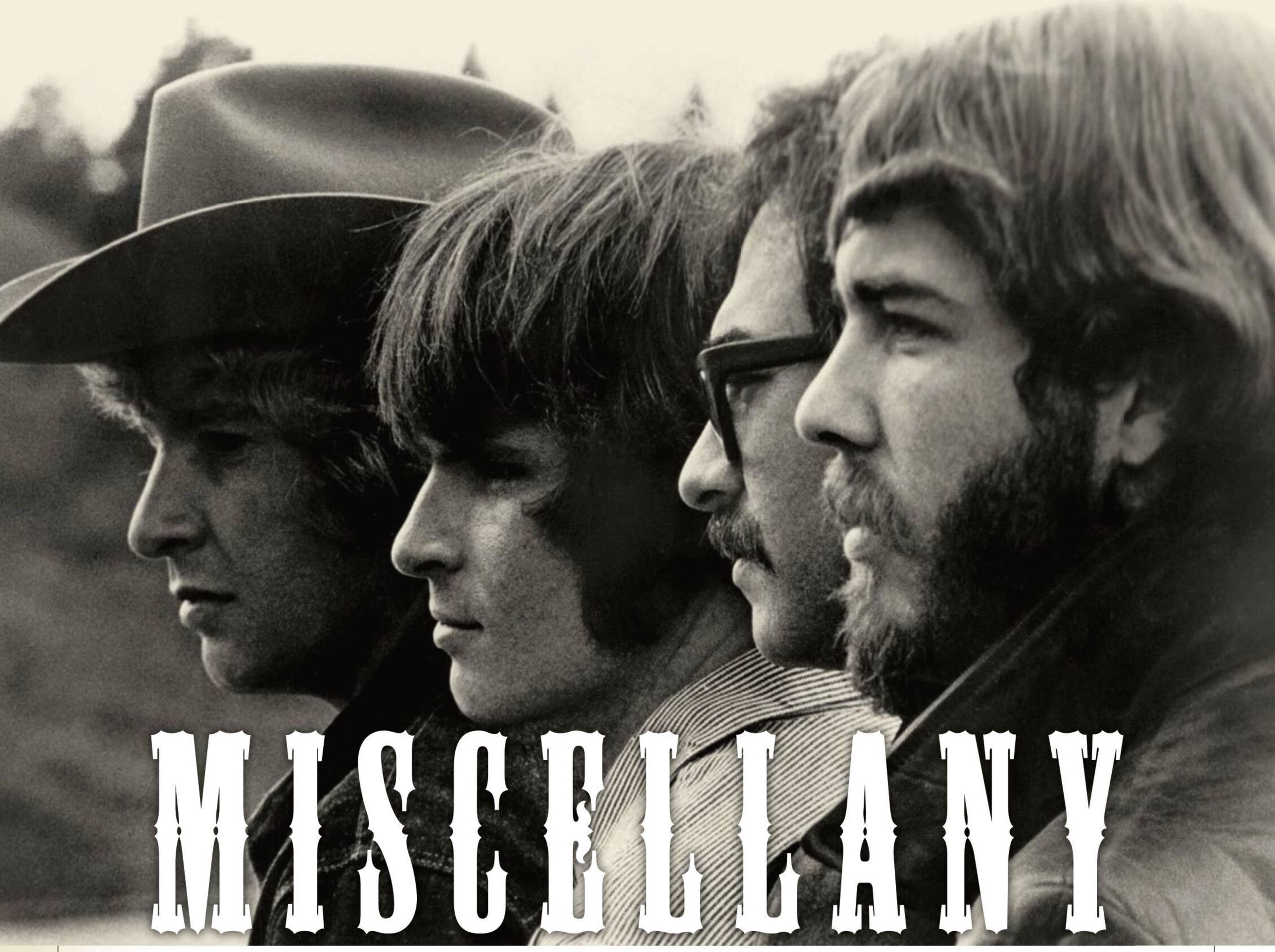
It's staggering that a show of such quality should sit in the vaults for so long, with the vanilla performances of *Live In Europe* and *The Concert* offered instead as the official versions of the CCR live experience. *Live At Woodstock* is a genuine lost classic, demonstrating the functional brutality of that rhythm section coupled with Fogerty's ferocious vocal power, his outstanding work on lead guitar and a body of outstanding songs to draw on. After a couple of fine throaty looseners – "Born On The Bayou" and "Green River" – the band hit their stride with "Ninety-Nine And A Half (Won't Do)", an easily overlooked Wilson Pickett cover from their debut album which is here transformed into a thunderous monster, building momentum from Clifford's mid-section drum break. The pace thereafter never stops. A series of four blistering originals follow – "Bootleg", a rip-roaring "Commotion", "Bad Moon Rising", "Proud Mary" – after which comes the home straight. "I Put A Spell On You" has sustained gothic drama and an unbelievably good guitar solo, after which comes a righteously fierce "The Night Time Is The Right Time" and a wild and unrelenting "Keep On Chooglin'", before the set closes with a glorious 10-minute "Suzie Q".

You probably don't think of Creedence as heavy rock, but listen to this and prepare to re-evaluate. It's an album that confirms that Creedence were the pre-eminent band in the world in 1969 and makes *Live At Woodstock* as essential to the Creedence catalogue as any of the studio albums or *Chronicle*.

Creedence's Woodstock performance was maybe the standout show from any band that weekend



MIKE RANDOLPH/PAUL POPPER/POPPERFOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES



MISCELLANY

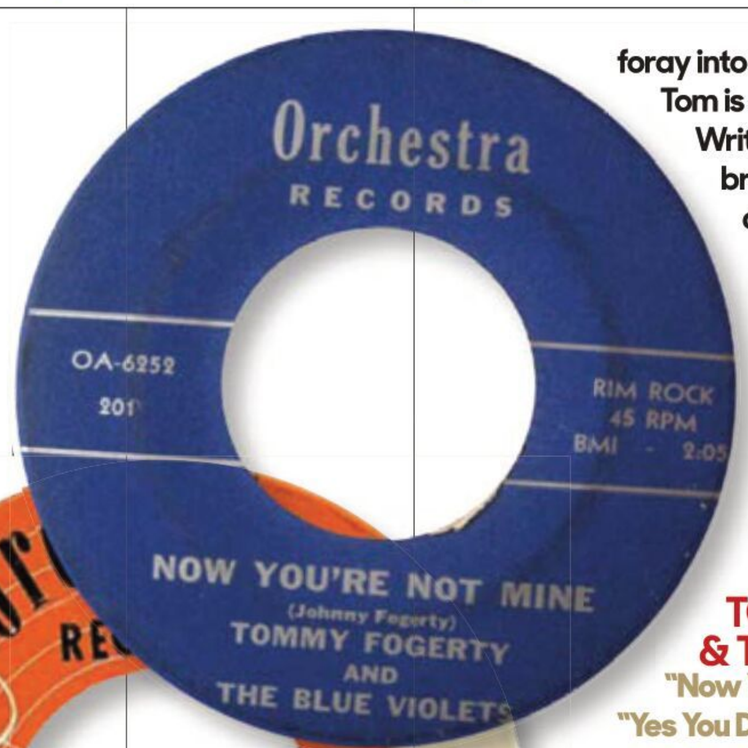
Untangling the early pre-CCR singles, solo work, cancelled albums and Creedence rarities. Fogerty's "Weeping In The Promised Land", broken down. Also: Creedence – The Dude's view.

RUN THROUGH THE JUMBLE

The pre-Creedence singles

TOMMY FOGERTY & THE BLUE VELVETS
"Come On Baby" / "Oh My Love"
ORCHESTRA, OCTOBER 1961

School friends John Fogerty (guitar), Stu Cook (piano) and Doug Clifford (drums) formed The Blue Velvets as an instrumental trio in 1959, but it took the arrival of Fogerty's older brother, songwriter and lead singer Tom, to push them into the studio for this peppy debut, a 12-bar blues with requisite echo.



TOMMY FOGERTY & THE BLUE VELVETS
"Have You Ever Been Lonely" / "Bonita"
ORCHESTRA, FEBRUARY 1962

The A-side, a crestfallen ballad in a doo-wop style, marks John Fogerty's first official foray into songwriting (though Tom is still frontman). Written by both brothers, "Bonita" is another yearning ode, enlivened by yammering piano and rockabilly guitar. The single impressed local DJ Casey Kasem, who playlisted it on Oakland's KEWB.

TOMMY FOGERTY & THE BLUE VIOLETS
"Now You're Not Mine" / "Yes You Did"
ORCHESTRA, JUNE 1962

Credited to 'Johnny Fogerty' for their only outing as The Blue Violets, the A-side is a contrived doo-wop-meets-rock'n'roll sobfest with close harmonies, sung with aching sincerity by Tom. The latter is responsible for the piano-driven flip, which, despite its livelier feel, sounds similarly tame.

THE GOLLIWOGS
"Don't Tell Me No Lies" / "Little Girl (Does Your Momma Know)"
FANTASY, NOVEMBER 1964

The quartet signed to San Francisco's Fantasy label in mid-1964, gaining an inexplicably poorly chosen new name. With Tom on rhythm guitar and Cook switching to bass, they briefly became The Visions, before co-owner Max Weiss insisted on the dubious moniker. This Beatles-derived 45 finds the Fogertys sharing lead vocals. Harmonies abound.

THE GOLLIWOGS
"Where You Been" / "You Came Walking"
FANTASY, APRIL 1965

Both sung by Tom, there's tasteful teen balladry on the A-side, while "You Came Walking" is a further foray into Fabs territory that borrows from "Please Please Me". As with their Fantasy debut, the Fogertys adopt strange songwriting pseudonyms: John billed as 'Toby Green', Tom as the even more preposterous 'Rann Wild'.

CHARLIE GILLETT COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

THE GOLLIWOGS
"You Can't Be True"/
"You Got Nothin' On Me"
FANTASY, JULY 1965

Further Wild/Green co-writes. First up is a promising R&B number with surges of garage pop and a trilling blues harmonica, with John Fogerty taking his first solo lead vocal. The B-side sees the brothers sharing frontman duties for some feelgood rock'n'roll.

THE GOLLIWOGS
"Brown-Eyed Girl"/
"You Better Be Careful"
SCORPIO, NOVEMBER 1965

Not to be confused with the Van Morrison standard, the A-side – the band's first for Scorpio, a short-lived subsidiary of Fantasy – nevertheless owes a fair bit to Them in its punkish attack. It fared particularly well in Miami, for some reason, making the upper reaches of *Billboard*'s Regional Breakout chart.

THE GOLLIWOGS
"Fight Fire" / "Fragile Child"
SCORPIO, MARCH 1966

The intense "Fight Fire" boasts a great garage-punk riff and a pre-echo of the bristling energy that defined CCR, complete with a Bo Diddley shuffle. The B-side, however, sounds like an unconvincing approximation of the early Who. John Fogerty, now firmly to the fore, handles both lead vocals.

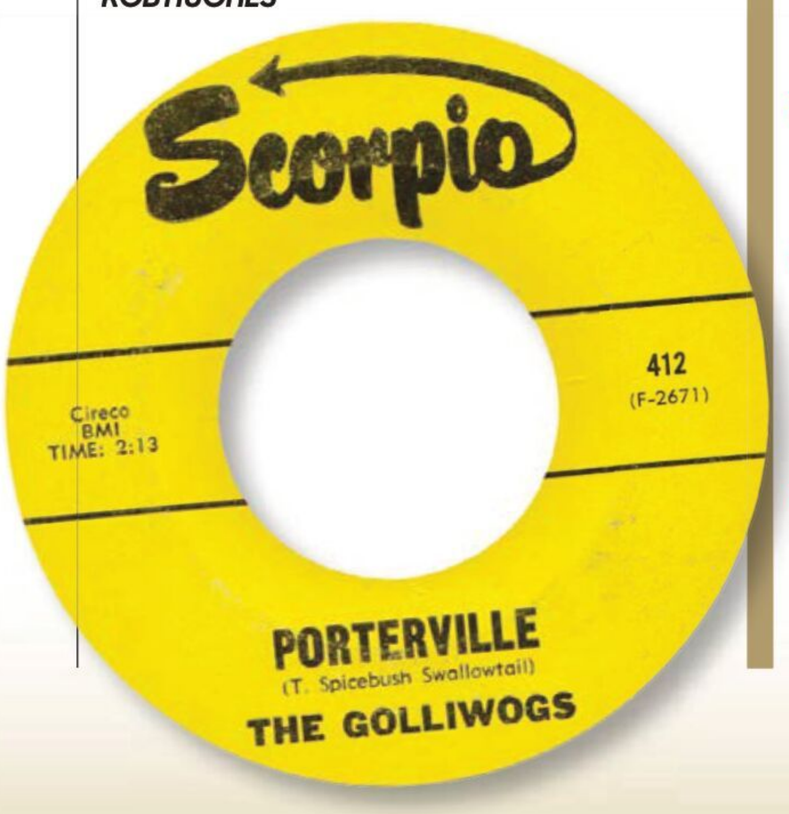
THE GOLLIWOGS
"Walking On The Water"/
"You Better Get It Before It Gets You"
SCORPIO, SEPTEMBER 1966

John is in full roar on this distorted psych-rock gem, later revived as "Walk On The Water" for CCR's first album, issued two years later. The B-side has more of a downtempo R&B flavour, though JF's charged vocal is no less impressive.

THE GOLLIWOGS
"Porterville" / "Call It Pretending"
SCORPIO, NOVEMBER 1967

Two classy originals from the younger Fogerty, who also handles production (and is credited, bizarrely, as 'T Spicebush Swallowtail', after a species of American butterfly). John wrote "Porterville" while marching in the US army. "Everything changed after that," he told *Uncut* in 2012. "I gave up trying to write sappy love songs about stuff I didn't know anything about, and I started inventing stories." In January 1968 it duly became the debut single under their new CCR banner.

ROB HUGHES



ANY PROMISING, UH, LEADS?

The Big Lebowski's stoner god of the bowling lane, The Dude (Jeff Bridges) hates the Eagles but loves CCR. They get several bleary nods in the film.

THE HANDOFF SCENE

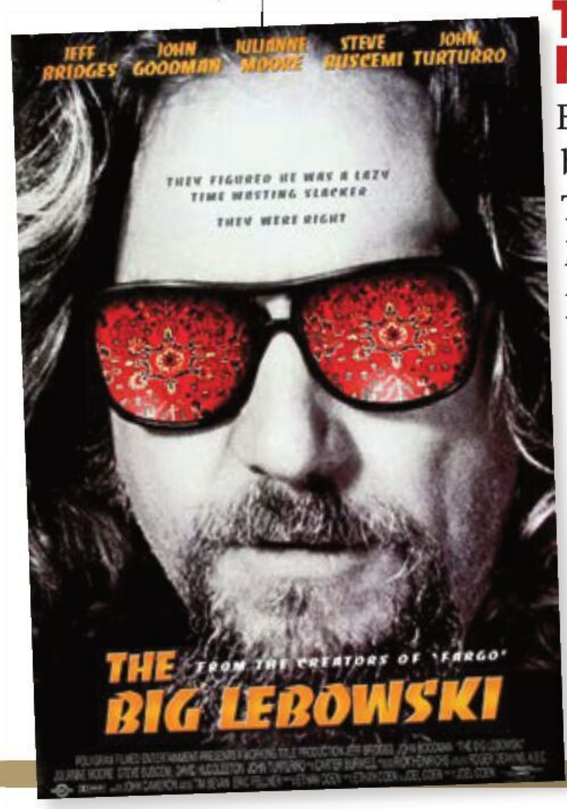
Concentrate, man. Mistaken by debt-collecting nihilist thugs for a millionaire with the same name (whose wife has been kidnapped on a $1 million ransom), the same millionaire offers The Dude $20,000 to drop off the cash. In the car en route to the handoff, however, The Dude's gun-toting Vietnam vet bowling buddy Walter (John Goodman) executes a last-minute switcheroo for a suitcase full of his dirty laundry so that he and Dude can keep the money. He jumps out of the car with an Uzi. All to the tune of "Run Through The Jungle".

THE POLICE REPORT SCENE

"Was there anything of value in the car?" asks the police officer filling in a report on The Dude's stolen vehicle. "...A tape deck, some Creedence tapes..." The Dude replies. "I wouldn't hold out much hope for the tape deck..." one cop tells him. "...Or the Creedence," says the other.

THE CAR POUND SCENE

While pinching out the dregs of a roach in the bath, The Dude receives a call to tell him his car has been found. But, it's been left a wreck and the briefcase has gone. Good news: "You're lucky they left the tape deck," the policeman tells him, "and the Creedence." Bad news: a homeless person may have used his car as a refuge. And maybe as a toilet.

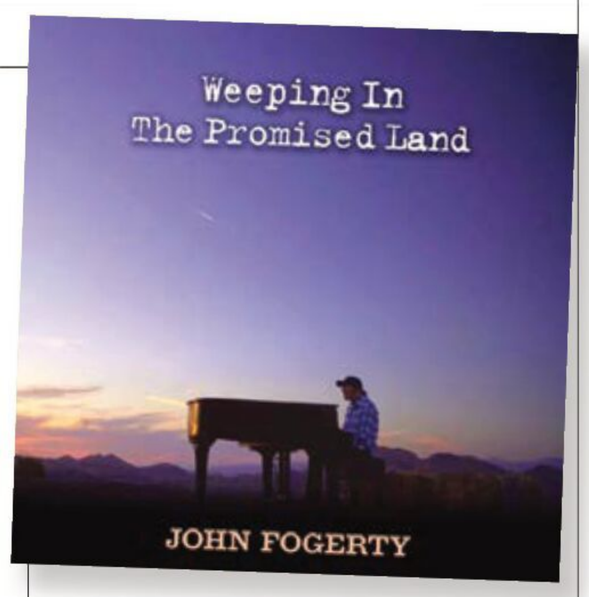


THE SHORTS ON FIRE SCENE

Enjoying a celebratory beer and blunt in his recovered Torino, The Dude fires up "Looking Out My Back Door" and bashes his palm along on the roof. He's distracted, however, by a blue VW Beetle following him. He attempts to flick the tiny spliff out of a closed window but misses and finds his groin in danger of catching fire. Having quenched the flames with his beer, he then crashes into a dumpster. Oh, man.

"WEEPING IN THE PROMISED LAND"

Trump, pandemic, Black Lives Matter... Inside the newest Fogerty music.



Released: January 6, 2021
What is it? Fogerty's first new song in eight years, and his personal comeback after issuing a cease-and-desist order to stop Donald Trump using "Fortunate Son" during campaign rallies.
What's it about? A state-of-the-nation address after four years of Trump rule, "Weeping..." laments the divisions and failures of America's leader at a time of national crisis: pandemic, police brutality, bad governance.
What does it sound like? A sombre spiritual, with Fogerty on piano accompanied only by gospel singers.
What's the setting? Biblical. Fogerty likens Trump to the "*forked tongued pharoah*" who drove the Israelites out of Egypt, now poisoning the water of the "Promised Land".
Who does he sing about? Trump comes in for most of the flack: "*Sick and weak, he dancin' on their bones*", Fogerty intones, "*Hissin' and spewin', it's power that he seeks*". His acolytes are also targeted as "*Satan's dark angels... falling from the sky*".
Does it touch on Black Lives Matter? "*Pharoah's army knockin' on the door*" liable to "*shoot you in your bed just like they done before*". This may also be a reference to the police, since he goes on to address the George Floyd murder: "*Out in the street, on your neck with a knee/All the people are cryin' your last words, 'I can't breathe'/And a white judge say 'there been no crime here today'*".
How about the pandemic? "*With dread in their eyes all the nurses are cryin'/So much sorrow, so much dyin'/Pharoah keep a-preachin' but he never had a plan*", he asserts, and gives Anthony Fauci a nod with the image of Trump "*shoutin' down the medicine man*".
What's in the video? As Fogerty plays a piano overlooking a conurbation, images of deserted streets, playgrounds, housebound cityfolk, candlelit vigils and praying nurses powerfully illustrate his message. The BLM movement is highlighted too, with footage from protests, raised fists aplenty and a man holding a sign reading 'SILENCE IS VIOLENCE'.
How did he write it? The title was written in a notebook some 25 years ago, and Fogerty used it for a previous song that was scrapped. This version was initially recorded as a full-band swamp-rock song with drummer Jim Keltner, Don Was on bass and Shaun Fogerty on guitar, but John's wife and manager Julie convinced him to transpose it to solo piano for added impact. "It ended up being the hardest song I've ever written," he told *Rolling Stone*.
No chooglin' then? None. But you'd have to think that the promised forthcoming Fogerty album will probably break up the righteous and anthemic with some goodtime rock'n'roll.

MARK BEAUMONT

UNFORTUNATE SON

The misfiring solo career of the older Fogerty brother

ASIDE from the increasingly toxic relationship with his brother, Tom Fogerty's main beef with CCR was that his songs weren't getting a look-in. Indeed, only one of his tunes (Golliwogs remake "Walk On The Water") ever made it onto a Creedence album. Good reason, then, for the guitarist to quit in early 1971 and launch a solo career on Fantasy.

The label duly threw their weight behind debut 45 "Goodbye Media Man" (a six-minute affair split across both sides of vinyl), by funding an extended promo film that went out to over 50 TV stations across the US. The single bombed, but expectations remained high for his first album, ***Tom Fogerty*** ★★★, issued the following year. Backed by an ensemble that included Zappa percussionist Billy Mundi and keyboard player Merl Saunders, it's a curious set that sparks and flickers without ever really catching fire, at its brightest on the ringing electric folk of "Lady Of Fatima". Peaking at No 78 on *Billboard*, it would be the only Fogerty solo LP to chart.

Still, he wasted no time in returning to the studio for 1972's ***Excalibur*** ★★. The trump card was Jerry Garcia, with whom Fogerty (along with Saunders) had been gigging around the Bay Area for several months. Alas, it's the Dead leader's contributions – crying steel on "Forty Years"; a spooky distorted solo on "Faces, Places, People" – that linger longest on a mostly pedestrian album dominated by generic boogie-blues.

Fantasy's response was to get the old band together, sort of. With Stu Cook and Doug Clifford as rhythm section, 1974's ***Zephyr National*** ★★★ is a marginal improvement. "Mystic Isle Avalon", a garbled New Age vision that references magic light and leprechauns, is notable for featuring John Fogerty on lead guitar (though he insisted on doing his part separately), making it the last ever recording to feature all four members of CCR. The standout, though, is "Joyful Resurrection," a country choogler that's Creedence in all but name.

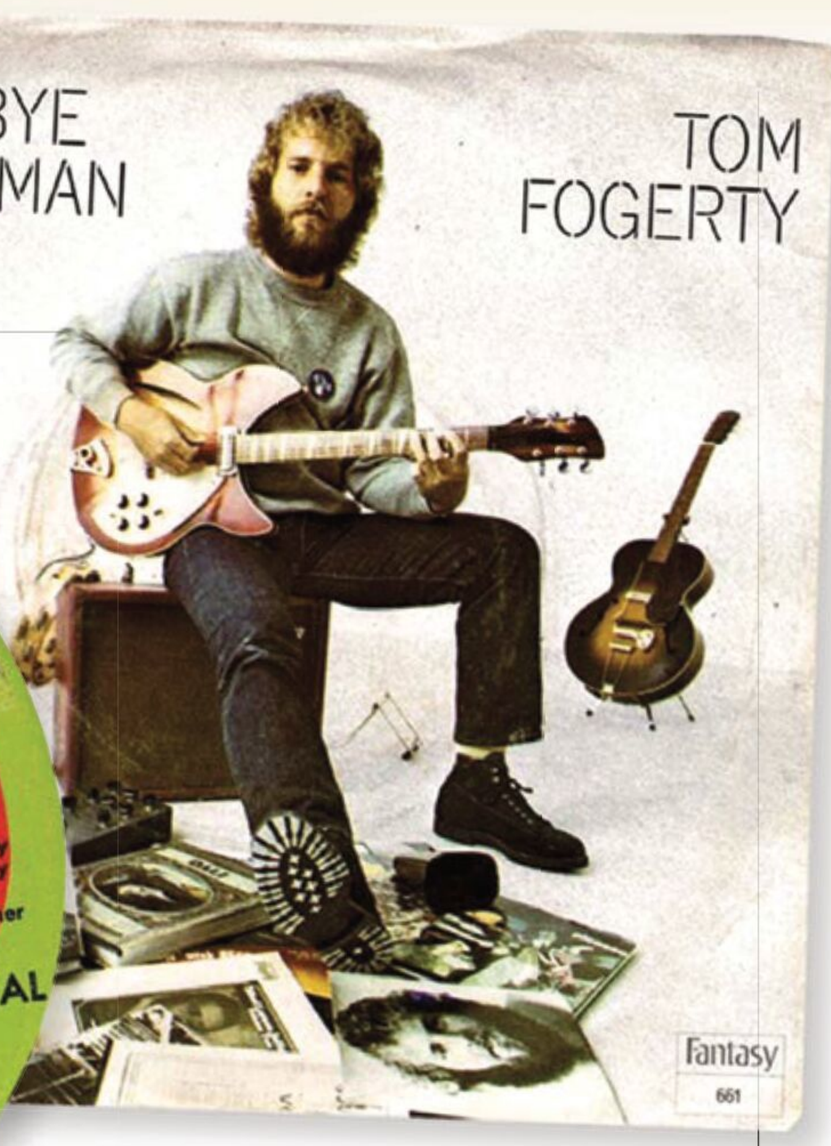
Sadly, that's as good as solo Tom ever got. ***Myopia*** ★★, also from '74, is pretty featureless, unless you happen to favour cod reggae and ploddy country-blues. Before the year was out, Fantasy had terminated Fogerty's contract. His solution was to form a rock band. Alongside fellow singer-guitarist Randy Oda, bassist Anthony Davis and drummer Bobby Cochran, Ruby's self-titled debut (★★★), on PBR International, landed in 1976. Sharing the songwriting with his new compadres, Fogerty offers a decent mix of rootsy AOR, though its most curious number is "BART", an Oda instrumental co-opted by the BBC to soundtrack the test card between schools programmes and, later on, Ceefax (in fact, it was the final track played before 2012's digital switchover).

A second Ruby outing, the lacklustre ***Rock & Roll Madness*** ★★, followed in 1978. Their decision to disband soon after was probably the sensible thing.

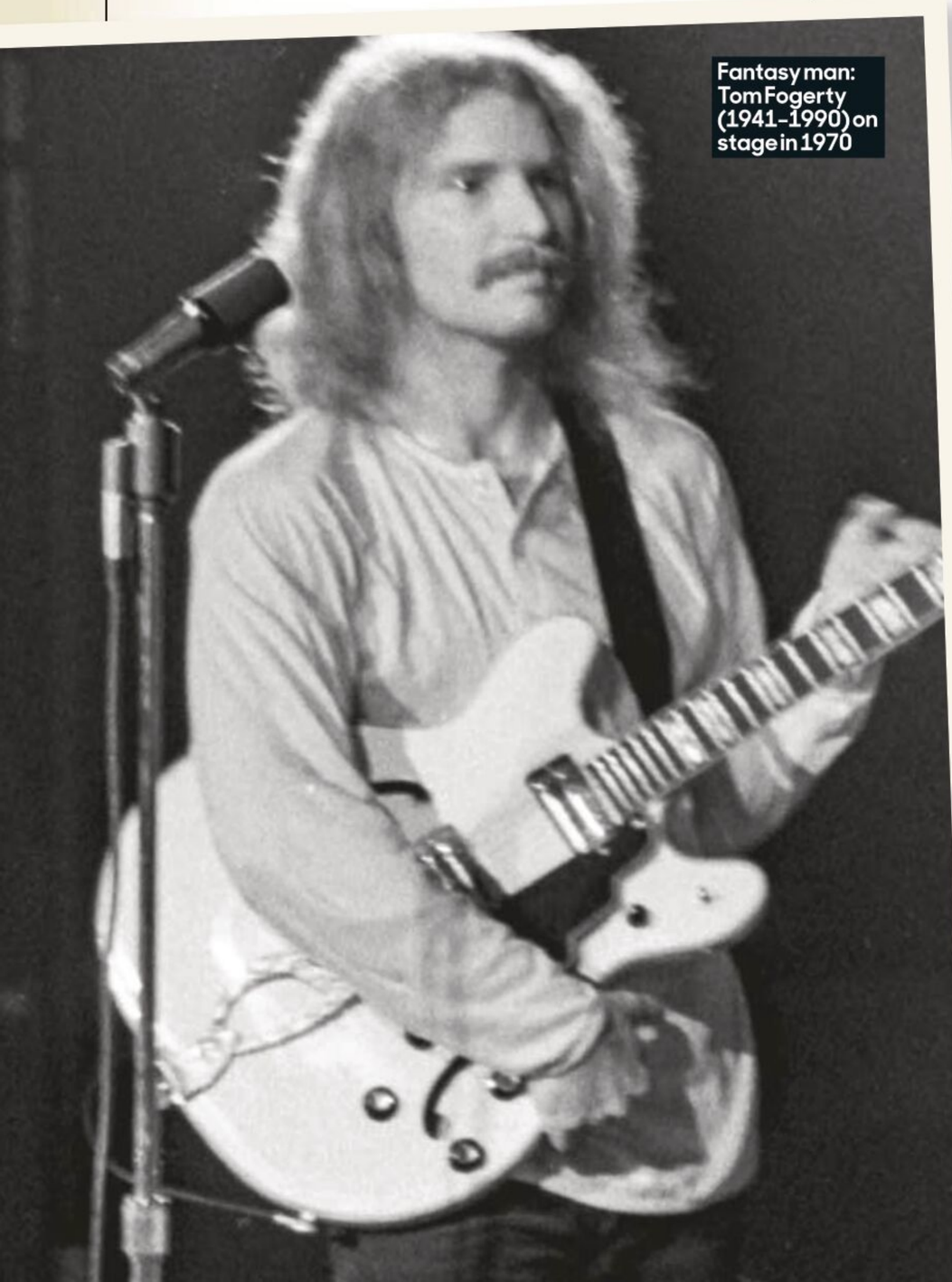
Fogerty returned to Fantasy for 1981's ***Deal It Out*** ★★. There's a Doug Clifford co-write, "Champagne Love", but the two highlights are both covers: the rattling "Mystery Train" and Van Morrison's lesser-known "You Move Me". With Fogerty's muse seemingly AWOL, he decided to move to Arizona and enter semi-retirement. Fantasy put out a Ruby compilation, ***Precious Gems***, in his absence.

He reconvened with Oda in 1988, cutting a batch of new co-writes, backed by Fogerty's son Jeff on bass and Oda's drummer brother, Kevin. Sadly, the sessions for ***Sidekicks*** ★★★ were derailed by serious illness. Fogerty was diagnosed with Aids, believed to have been contracted via a blood transfusion during back surgery earlier that decade. Fantasy eventually released the album in 1992, two years after Fogerty's death from Aids-related tuberculosis.

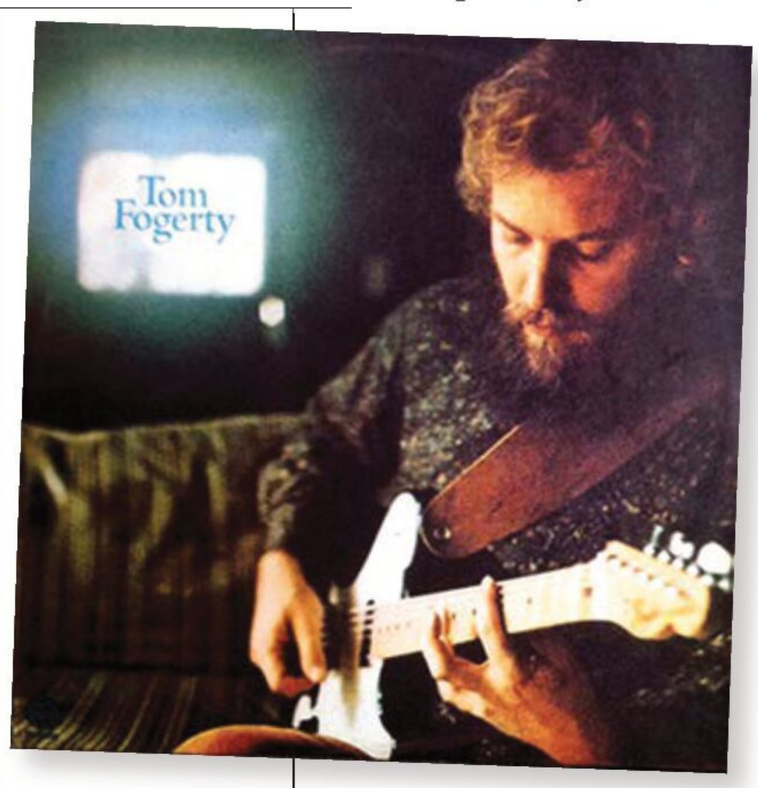
ROB HUGHES



TOM FOGERTY IS A CURIOUS SET THAT SPARKS AND FLICKERS WITHOUT EVER REALLY CATCHING FIRE


Fantasy man: Tom Fogerty (1941–1990) on stage in 1970

JEFF HOCHBERG/GETTY IMAGES



GLAD TUNES ON THE RISE

Pricing the CCR collectables

OBSCURITY can often spell value, and the handful of singles CCR released before they became CCR have always been desirable. First up: Tommy Fogerty & The Blue Velvets, whose three early-'60s 7"s "Have You Ever Been Lonely", "Come On Baby" and "Now You're Not Mine" – released on San Francisco label Orchestra – are next-to-impossible to find, and even harder to price. We *can* tell you a copy of 1961's "Have You Ever Been Lonely" sold on eBay for $325 back in 2012, with 27 bids.

Initially released in the US only, The Golliwogs' 45s come up for sale more regularly. $100 seems a rough guideline for items like 1964's "Don't Tell Me No Lies"/ "Little Girl (Does Your Mamma Know?") on the crimson-red Fantasy label, or 1965's "Where You Been"/ "You Came Walking", also on Fantasy. In the UK, the band found a home alongside The Seeds and The Chambers Brothers on the Vocalion label. Rare UK Vocalion copies of "Brown-Eyed Girl"/ "You Better Be Careful" are worth £120 – about double what you'd pay for a US version on the Scorpio imprint. As with any artist, the very best condition items will always command a premium. $500 was the recent asking price for an unplayed US copy of "Fight Fire"/ "Fragile Child", apparently secured from the personal stash of the former chief financial officer of Fantasy Records.

Typically, CCR's own singles sold well, so don't hold anything like these three-figure price tags. The exception would be the one release from the overdue Golliwogs/CCR rebrand period. At time of writing, a VG+ repress copy of "Porterville"/ "Call It Pretending" from February 1968 is up for grabs on collector site Discogs.com for $120. Other territories have some unusual 7" treasures – and at rising prices, too. Examples include the 1969 Argentina four-track EP "Conmocion Rio Verde" (as in "Commotion" and "Green River") available for around £20, or Singapore EP "It Came Out Of The Sky", which has recently topped £50.

CCR albums can be valued on a sliding scale. While £40 is a decent VG+ yardstick for their debut, mint or still-sealed copies will destroy that valuation several times over. A UK iteration, billed by the seller as "YOUR FINAL UPGRADE COPY" sold for £255 in 2019, with 37 bids. Standard UK versions of *Willy...*, *Green River*, *Bayou Country* and *Cosmo's Factory* are still cheap, relatively. £15-£20 should secure you perfectly presentable copies of each. *Pendulum* and *Mardi Gras* and Tom and John's '70s solo joints – *The Blue Ridge Riders* LP, say – are often in the tenner box and below.

Look out, though, for a relatively new trend. We're yet to witness the 1973 UK cassette tape of *Cosmo's Factory* sell on Discogs, but nearly 100 people have it on their wantlist. The new-breed tapehead is a committed collector, and the popularity of vintage cassettes is growing by the week. You may find that a mint copy of this cassette soon matches the value of the rare laminated cover vinyl version, which means £25+. Crazy times. *MARK BENTLEY*

COUNTRY ROCK DISCO! CELTIC INSTRUMENTALS! DAVID GEFFEN!

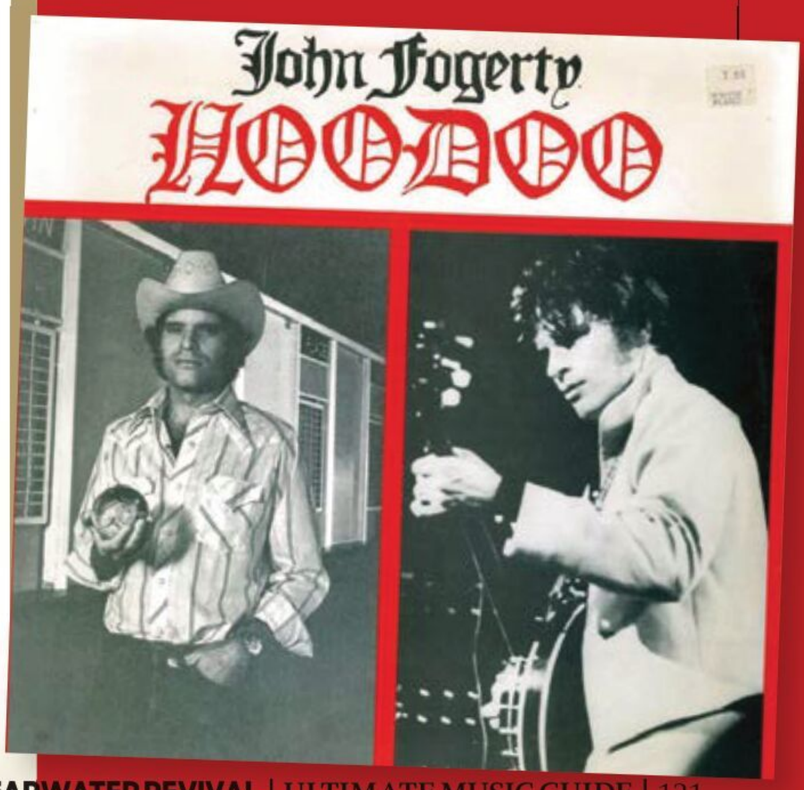
The tale of *Hoodoo*, the cancelled 1976 solo album

ON a roll after completing 1975's self-titled album, John Fogerty quickly laid down a third solo record in 1976. Two of the album's tracks – "You Got The Magic" and "Evil Thing" – were released as a single that April, but when it came to releasing the album Fogerty and his label Asylum agreed that it wasn't up to scratch, and pulled it. After several failed attempts to improve it, Fogerty instructed the label to destroy the master tapes and wouldn't release another album for nine years.

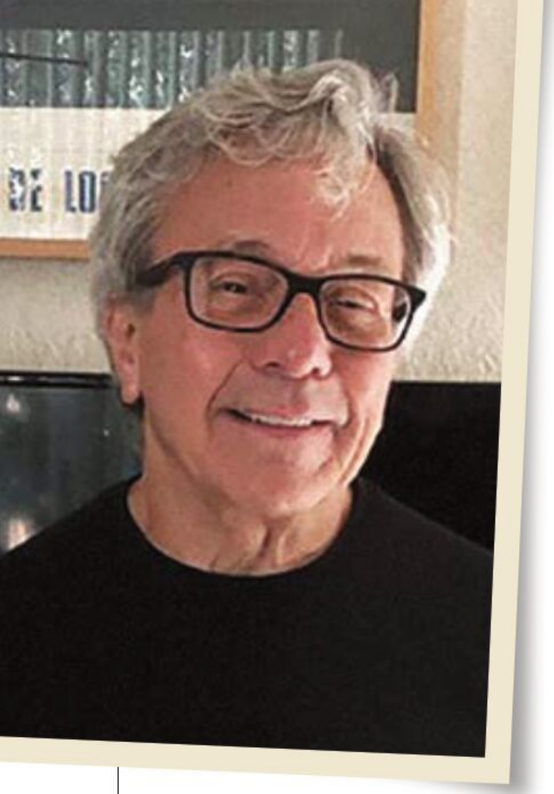
It's actually not all bad. His attempt at amalgamating country rock and disco on "You Got The Magic" is only moderately successful, but "Between The Lines" is comfortingly plush and passionate Americana. The Who-like "Hoodoo Man", at least in its tinny bootlegged incarnation, appears to envision new wave from a Nashville biker bar. Soul funk? There is soul funk also: "Telephone" and "Evil Thing" (in which a done-wrong Fogerty concludes, "*What good is love?*") include his best Sam Cooke falsettos and James Brown growls. Best of all, "On The Run" is something of a lost classic, Fogerty fleeing the noose with the sheriff on his tail across a wild west landscape full of trapper hooks.

The filler? "Henrietta" is formulaic honky-tonk rock'n'roll that Fogerty tackles on autopilot, "Marchin' To Blarney" is little more than a chirpy instrumental with a hint of civil war to it and "Leave My Woman Alone" an unchallenging Sun Records blues with a live-at-the-preacherhouse feel.

Hear it on Youtube, where bootleg versions add four additional tracks, "You Don't Owe Me", "Back In The Hills", "Comin' Down The Road" and "Ricochet". *MARK BEAUMONT*



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



OUTRO

STOP ME

IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE

"We do whatever has to be done ourselves." In high-end surroundings, the young *Bud Scoppa* meets Creedence, and *John Fogerty*, clearly the CEO of the whole operation.

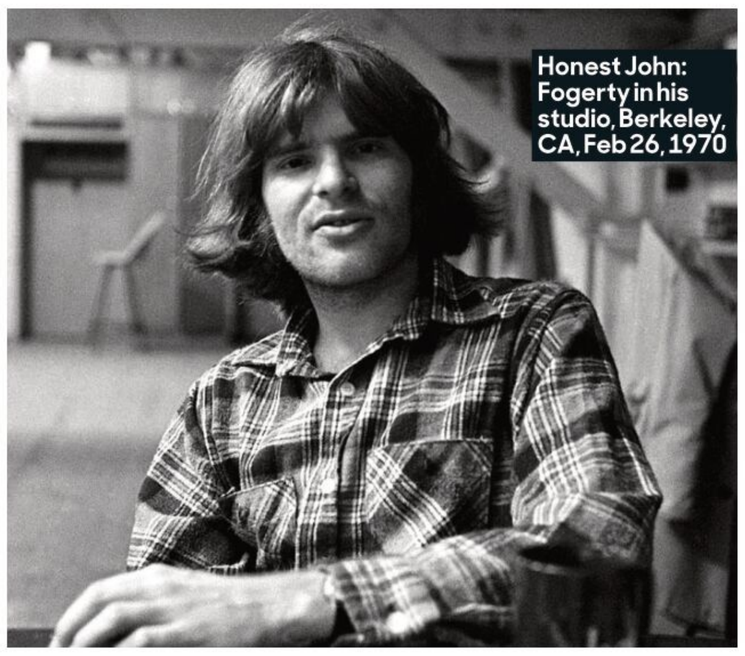
ON the morning of May 14, 1970, I enter the posh Plaza Hotel for the very first time to interview John Fogerty and his bandmates for a *Crawdaddy* cover story. Just nine months earlier, my first published piece – a rave review of *Green River* – had appeared in *Rock* magazine, within days of Creedence's breakout set at Woodstock. Since then, the prolific, no-nonsense quartet had put out *Willy And The Poor Boys*, their fourth LP, and scored six hit singles, including a pair of double-A-sided tracks from the as-yet-unreleased *Cosmo's Factory*, on their way to improbably succeeding The Beatles as the biggest band in the world. It would be my first interview with actual rock stars, and I'd be conducting it just hours after Creedence's headlining gig at Madison Square Garden, a taut, hit-filled set that was over in less than an hour.

I use the gold-plated Plaza house phone to ring up the band's suite. As I head toward the elevator, I spot Doug Clifford walking toward the front door with his wife – apparently, he won't be joining us. As they pass through the lobby, two elderly men in grey suits glance at each other curiously, wondering, no doubt, why these hippies have invaded this bastion of old-money opulence. Not everybody has heard of Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Up the elevator and down a hallway ablaze in glass, gold and mirrors, I enter the suite to find Fogerty eating a room-service breakfast while his brother Tom and Stu Cook sit on couches. I take a seat, turn on the cassette recorder and, while Fogerty attends to his bacon and eggs, begin chatting with Cook. He helpfully provides me with an insight into the Creedence pecking order when he explains how Fogerty introduces a new song to the band. "He's showing us our parts as we prepare the song, and we get a feeling about it as it's being built, but sometimes we don't even hear the finished record until it comes out," Cook admits.

Fogerty, clad in his signature plaid shirt and worn jeans, takes a seat and listens attentively, his square jaw set, eyes alert and confident, while Cook talks about playing live versus recording. When he points out that the bandmembers have been together for 11 years, I hazard an opinion: "You can tell by listening to The Band and Creedence that they've been together for a long time."

"I don't agree with that", Fogerty says in a broad, flat, almost Midwestern voice far different than his onstage drawl. "We wouldn't have been together for so long if we didn't like each other, so it's really the other way around." Subject closed.



Honest John: Fogerty in his studio, Berkeley, CA, Feb 26, 1970

"I DON'T WRITE ANYTHING I DON'T FEEL"
John Fogerty

During the next hour, Fogerty fields my questions with the same intellectual ferocity that resonates through his lyrics and guitar hooks. He may look blue-collar, but he comes off like the CEO of this operation, decisively executing a detailed business plan, which his staff of role-players dutifully follow. As he elucidates his methodology, Fogerty uses "we" and "I" interchangeably.

"We're playing simpler-sounding music with no freak-out soloing and none of the stage dramatics – falling on my knees and that sort of thing," he says of his approach. "But I also wanted to get intelligence across so that a person who thinks can still dig the music. We're trying to be as honest as you could be, because I respect the music as music."

But isn't a degree of artifice involved when a guy from the East Bay sings about being "Born On The Bayou"?

Fogerty has obviously heard this one before. "Well, John Lennon said, '*Nothing is real*'; everything has an element of showbiz," he acknowledges. "But we're not interested in conning our audience – we're not manufacturers of songs. I don't write anything I don't feel."

How does that work?

"Ahead of time, you lay it down analytically and decide how you're going to do it. But once you finally know exactly what you're gonna do, then you can forget that whole thing and do it by feeling it. And then it comes off. It's efficiency, doing your job, taking care of business."

Tom Fogerty opens his mouth for the first time. "You can be a businessman without necessarily being a capitalist," he offers.

John ploughs ahead, growing increasingly animated. "In the early days, we got conned and lied to so many times," he says. "Now we've made sure that doesn't happen; we do whatever has to be done ourselves. We don't want four limos or stars on our dressing-room doors; all we want is to be able to put on the best show possible. I try not to yell at incompetent people – I know they're trying – but I'm not always successful. So I suppose to those people I seem arrogant. If you just want to do the best job possible, then you're being 'difficult'."

The road manager enters the suite to tell the band it's time to get moving. "Do you mind if I take these?" Fogerty asks as he grabs the copies of *Rolling Stone* and *Crawdaddy* I've brought with me off the coffee table. "I need something to read on the train."

I follow the entourage down the elevator and out the front door of the Plaza, where two black limos – not four – await them. The magazine's photographer asks the bandmembers to pose for a parting shot, and they line up between the marble colonnades of the portico for a group portrait. As he disappears into the darkened interior of the limo, Fogerty smiles and says, "You know, Lennon's '*Nothing is real*' gets truer every day." The band is then transported down Fifth Ave toward Penn Station, where they'll board the express train to Philadelphia, the next stop on their arena tour. GR

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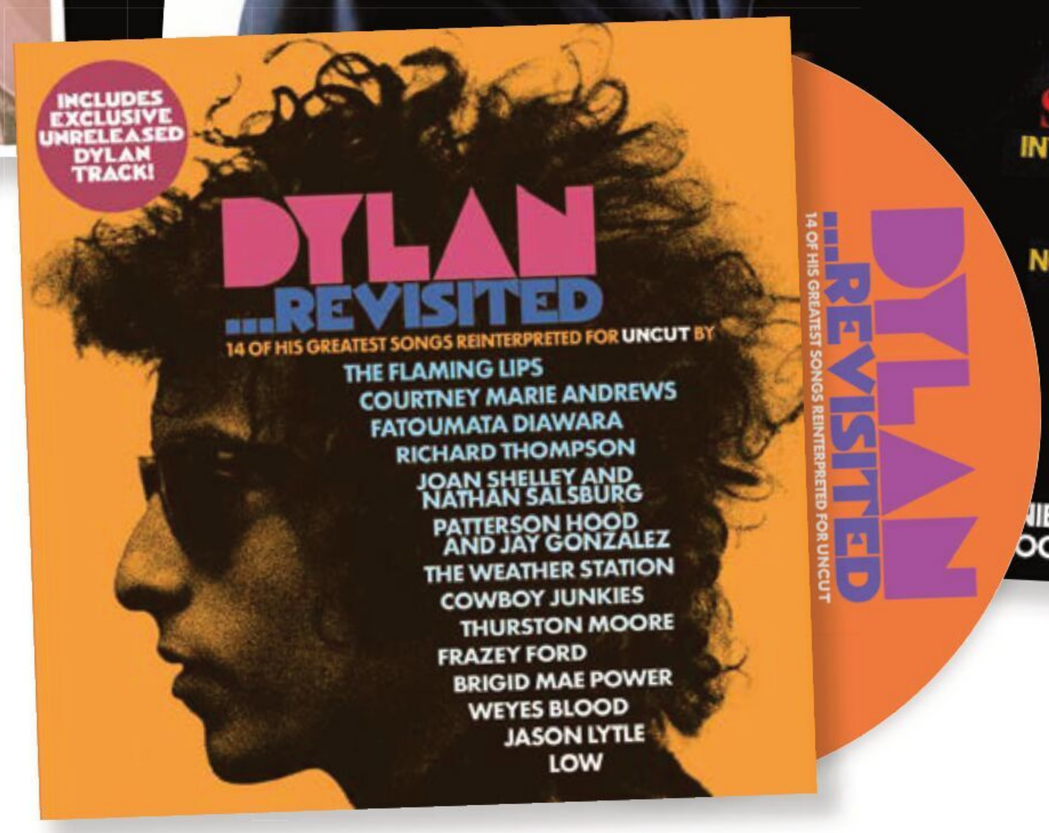

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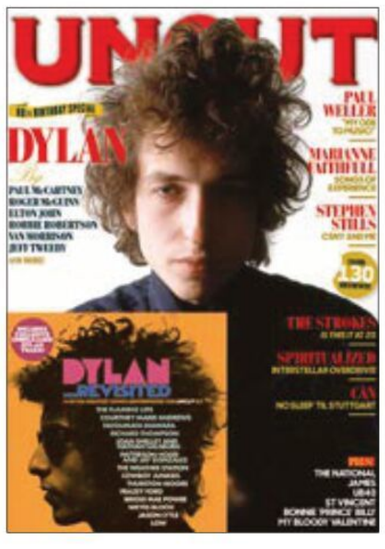

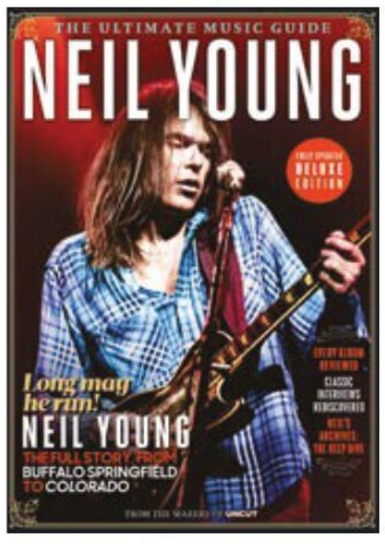

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